

STEP THERAPY POLICY

- POLICY:** Antidepressants – Bupropion Long-Acting Step Therapy Policy
- Aplenzin[®] (bupropion hydrobromide extended-release tablets – Bausch Health)
 - Auvelity[™] (dextromethorphan hydrobromide and bupropion hydrochloride extended-release tablets – Axsome)
 - Forfivo XL (bupropion hydrochloride extended-release tablets – Almatica)
 - Wellbutrin SR[®] (bupropion hydrochloride sustained-release tablets – GlaxoSmithKline, generic)
 - Wellbutrin XL[®] (bupropion hydrochloride extended-release tablets – Bausch Health, generic)

REVIEW DATE: 04/03/2024

OVERVIEW

Aplenzin, Auvelity, Forfivo XL, bupropion hydrochloride (HCl) sustained-release (SR) tablets, and bupropion HCl extended-release (ER) tablets are indicated for the **treatment of depression**.¹⁻⁵ Bupropion HCl ER tablets and Aplenzin are also indicated for the prevention of seasonal major depressive episodes in patients with seasonal affective disorder.^{2,3}

Aplenzin contains bupropion hydrobromide (HBr). Of note, 174 mg/day of bupropion HBr is equivalent to 150 mg/day of bupropion HCl.³ Therefore, when switching patients from bupropion HCl SR or ER tablets to Aplenzin (or vice versa), it is possible to give equivalent daily doses. Aplenzin is bioequivalent to bupropion HCl ER tablets, which has been demonstrated to have similar bioavailability to both the immediate-release and the SR formulations of bupropion. Forfivo XL is available as 450 mg ER tablets, while the other bupropion HCl ER tablets are available as 150 mg or 300 mg.^{2,4}

Auvelity contains a combination of dextromethorphan HBr, an uncompetitive N-methyl D-aspartate (NMDA) receptor antagonist and sigma-1 receptor agonist, and bupropion HCl, an aminoketone and cytochrome P450 (CYP)2D6 inhibitor.⁵ Each tablet contains 45 mg dextromethorphan HBr (equivalent to 32.98 mg dextromethorphan base) in an immediate-release formulation and 105 mg bupropion HCl (equivalent to 91.14 mg bupropion base) in an ER formulation.

Zyban[®] (bupropion HCl SR, generic only) contains the same active ingredient as bupropion HCl SR and ER tablets and Forfivo XL; however, Zyban is indicated as an aid to smoking cessation treatment.⁶ Because of the different indication for use, Zyban is not included in this policy.

Table 1. Available Long-Acting Bupropion-Containing Products.¹⁻⁵

Table 1 (continued). Available Long-Acting Bupropion-Containing Products.¹⁻⁵

HBr – Hydrobromide; HCl – Hydrochloride; ER – Extended-release; CYP – Cytochrome P450; SR – Sustained-release.

POLICY STATEMENT

This program has been developed to encourage the use of a Step 1 Product prior to the use of a Step 2 Product. If the Step Therapy rule is not met for a Step 2 Product at the point of service, coverage will be determined by the Step Therapy criteria below. All approvals are provided for 1 year in duration.

Automation: A patient with a of one Step 1 Product within the 130-day look-back period is excluded from Step Therapy.

Step 1: generic bupropion extended-release tablets, generic bupropion sustained-release tablets

Step 2: Aplenzin, Auvelity, Forfivo XL, Wellbutrin SR, Wellbutrin XL

CRITERIA

1. If the patient has tried one Step 1 Product, approve a Step 2 Product.
Note: If the patient has tried bupropion immediate-release tablets, they must still try a generic sustained- or extended-release tablet before receiving authorization for a Step 2 Product.
2. No other exceptions are recommended.

REFERENCES

1. Wellbutrin SR[®] sustained-release tablets [prescribing information]. Research Triangle Park, NC: GlaxoSmithKline; December 2022.
2. Wellbutrin XL[®] extended-release tablets [prescribing information]. Bridgewater, NJ: Bausch Health; March 2022.
3. Aplenzin[®] extended-release tablets [prescribing information]. Bridgewater, NJ: Bausch Health; March 2022.
4. Forfivo XL extended-release tablets [prescribing information]. Pine Brook, NJ: Almatica; December 2019.
5. Auvelity[™] extended-release tablets [prescribing information]. New York, NY: Axsome; August 2022.
6. Zyban[®] sustained-release tablets [prescribing information]. Research Triangle Park, NC: GlaxoSmithKline; March 2021.