



"Unbelievable...Toe Nail Fungus?...Seriously?"

June 23, 2015



These words blare from the start of a commercial that sometimes seems to run continuously during certain television events and they are shouted hysterically by the famous tennis player, John McEnroe while animated toes encrusted with fungus swing tennis rackets about a tennis match. The hero in the commercial is Jublia as it cures the fungus. What HR Benefits Managers and payors are shouting however is probably slightly different. When confronted with the claims from their beneficiaries asking their physicians to prescribe the higher than gold priced agent, Jublia, manufactured by Valeant Pharmaceuticals, *they* are appropriately shouting, ***Unbelievable...\$6,600 to treat Toe Nail Fungus?...Seriously?*** That is the average wholesale price to treat one big toe nail for 48 weeks. (assuming two drops per day using one 4ml bottle per month). AND many patients may need to treat more than one nail . And what part does your patient pay? How about \$0? Thats right, the manufacturer offers a discount off of their co-pay to \$0. Last we checked Gold was worth about \$1200 per ounce and Jublia, (\$600 per 4ml bottle) is worth almost four times that at \$4,500 per ounce!

Unfortunately, the cost of the product may not even be the worst of it. You see, the package insert from the manufacturer states that when used as directed and applied everyday for the entire length of ***recommended treatment of 48 weeks***. Jublia has a ***complete cure rate of only 15.2% to 17.8%***. Interestingly, the very same studies reported that the liquid alone without the medicine had a 3.3% to 5.5% complete cure rate. When determining coverage of this agent one consideration could be whether to consider Jublia and drugs like as medical or cosmetic drugs, and that would be one way to decline coverage if your plan does not cover drugs used for cosmetic purposes (i.e. Latisse or Botox and Retin-A for wrinkles).

Another agent used for this purpose Ciclopirox Nail Lacquer, is available generically and had published cure rates of 29-36% according to a study in the Journal of the American Academy of



With over 35 years of experience as a pharmacist, Bob Schenk is uniquely qualified to write about pharmaceutical care, savings opportunities in plan benefit design, and abuses by PBM's and Big Pharma. His experience includes building and operating two retail pharmacies, working as a hospital pharmacist, consultant pharmacist, and manager of three ambulatory pharmacies for a leading healthcare system.

Featured Posts

Front Line Pharmacists Publish Real-World Medication Savings Opportunities Blog
June 23, 2015



Recent Posts

ACRUX DDS PTY LTD. et al.
EXHIBIT 1628



"Unbelievable...Toe Nail Fungus?...Seriously?"

June 23, 2015



These words blare from the start of a commercial that sometimes seems to run continuously during certain television events and they are shouted hysterically by the famous tennis player, John McEnroe while animated toes encrusted with fungus swing tennis rackets about a tennis match. The hero in the commercial is Jublia as it cures the fungus. What HR Benefits Managers and payors are shouting however is probably slightly different. When confronted with the claims from their beneficiaries asking their physicians to prescribe the higher than gold priced agent, Jublia, manufactured by Valeant Pharmaceuticals, *they* are appropriately shouting, ***Unbelievable...\$6,600 to treat Toe Nail Fungus?...Seriously?*** That is the average wholesale price to treat one big toe nail for 48 weeks. (assuming two drops per day using one 4ml bottle per month). AND many patients may need to treat more than one nail . And what part does your patient pay? How about \$0? Thats right, the manufacturer offers a discount off of their co-pay to \$0. Last we checked Gold was worth about \$1200 per ounce and Jublia, (\$600 per 4ml bottle) is worth almost four times that at \$4,500 per ounce!

Unfortunately, the cost of the product may not even be the worst of it. You see, the package insert from the manufacturer states that when used as directed and applied everyday for the entire length of ***recommended treatment of 48 weeks***. Jublia has a ***complete cure rate of only 15.2% to 17.8%***. Interestingly, the very same studies reported that the liquid alone without the medicine had a 3.3% to 5.5% complete cure rate. When determining coverage of this agent one consideration could be whether to consider Jublia and drugs like as medical or cosmetic drugs, and that would be one way to decline coverage if your plan does not cover drugs used for cosmetic purposes (i.e. Latisse or Botox and Retin-A for wrinkles).

Another agent used for this purpose Ciclopirox Nail Lacquer, is available generically and had published cure rates of 29-36% according to a study in the Journal of the American Academy of



With over 35 years of experience as a pharmacist, Bob Schenk is uniquely qualified to write about pharmaceutical care, savings opportunities in plan benefit design, and abuses by PBM's and Big Pharma. His experience includes building and operating two retail pharmacies, working as a hospital pharmacist, consultant pharmacist, and manager of three ambulatory pharmacies for a leading healthcare system.

Featured Posts

Front Line Pharmacists Publish Real-World Medication Savings Opportunities Blog
June 23, 2015



Recent Posts

pocket would most likely try the generic ciclopirox first (and probably only ever) versus having to fork over more than \$6,000 for a possible 3-5% better outcome.

BUT WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?

Most pharmacists (and most rational-thinking people) do not believe that a drug to treat a superficial cosmetic condition with a possible 15% cure is worth a \$6,600 investment to achieve the perfect looking toenail. Unless your professional livelihood depends on perfect looking nails, the return on investment here is probably just not worth the added costs. As a benefits manager or decision maker you do have several options;

1. Consider drugs used for treatment of toenail fungus cosmetic agents and non-covered
2. If you want to cover topical drugs for nail fungus, restrict covered agents to generics only or add Jublia and similar Brand Name agents to a step therapy program requiring patients to try and fail a full course of a lower cost agent first

J Am Acad Dermatol. 2000 Oct;43(4 Suppl):S70-80.

Ciclopirox nail lacquer topical solution 8% in the treatment of toenail onychomycosis.
Gupta AK1, Fleckman P, Baran R.



GET READY TO CATCH THE WAVE OR WIPE OUT (A Sea Change is Happening in Pharmacy- Hang on tight)
January 19, 2016



Traditional vs Passthrough PBM selection-How to choose
September 19, 2015



EXCLUDING DRUGS IN YOUR 2016 PRESCRIPTION PLAN..... A NECESSARY STRATEGY
August 18, 2015

Connect



0 comments



Leave a message...

Contact Me

Tel: 732-239-2192
BAYSHOREBOB@AOL.COM



© 2015 JSCHENK

Name

Email

Subject

Message

Send