Pharmacy Policy Bulletin

Title: Droxidopa (Northera™)
Policy #: Rx.01.166

Application of pharmacy policy is determined by benefits and contracts. Benefits may vary based on product line, group, or contract. Some medications may be subject to precertification, age, quantity, or formulary restrictions (ie limits on non-preferred drugs). Individual member benefits must be verified.

This pharmacy policy document describes the status of pharmaceutical information and/or technology at the time the document was developed. Since that time, new information relating to drug efficacy, interactions, contraindications, dosage, administration routes, safety, or FDA approval may have changed. This Pharmacy Policy will be regularly updated as scientific and medical literature becomes available. This information may include new FDA-approved indications, withdrawals, or other FDA alerts. This type of information is relevant not only when considering whether this policy should be updated, but also when applying it to current requests for coverage.

Members are advised to use participating pharmacies in order to receive the highest level of benefits.

Intent:
The intent of this policy is to communicate the medical necessity criteria for droxidopa (Northera™) as provided under the member’s prescription drug benefit.

Description:
Droxidopa (Northera) is indicated for the treatment of orthostatic dizziness, lightheadedness, or the “feeling that you are about to black out” in adult patients with symptomatic neurogenic orthostatic hypotension caused by primary autonomic failure (Parkinson’s disease, multiple system atrophy, and pure autonomic failure), dopamine beta-hydroxylase deficiency, and non-diabetic autonomic neuropathy. Effectiveness beyond two weeks of treatment has not been demonstrated. The continued effectiveness of droxidopa (Northera) should be assessed periodically.

The exact mechanism of action of droxidopa (Northera) in the treatment of neurogenic orthostatic hypotension is unknown. Droxidopa (Northera) is a synthetic amino acid analog that is directly metabolized to norepinephrine by dopa-decarboxylase, which is extensively distributed throughout the body. Droxidopa (Northera) is believed to exert its pharmacological effects through norepinephrine and not through the parent molecule or other metabolites. Norepinephrine increases blood pressure by inducing peripheral arterial and venous vasoconstriction. Droxidopa (Northera) in humans induces small and transient rises in plasma norepinephrine. Droxidopa is also known as L-dihydroxyphenylserine, or L-DOPS.

Policy:
Droxidopa (Northera) is approved when ALL of the following criteria are met:

1. Diagnosis of symptomatic neurogenic orthostatic hypotension by an appropriate specialist (i.e., cardiologist, neurologist); and
2. Age 18 years or older; and
3. Inadequate response or inability to tolerate midodrine
Droxidopa (Northera) is re-approved when ALL of the following criteria are met:

1. Diagnosis of symptomatic neurogenic orthostatic hypotension by an appropriate specialist (i.e., cardiologist, neurologist); and
2. Documentation of response to therapy

Initial authorization duration: 1 month
Reauthorization duration: 6 months

**Black Box Warning:**
Supine hypertension: Monitor supine blood pressure prior to and during treatment and more frequently when increasing doses. Elevating the head of the bed lessens the risk of supine hypertension, and blood pressure should be measured in this position. If supine hypertension cannot be managed by elevation of the head of the bed, reduce or discontinue Northera.

**Guidelines:**
Refer to the specific manufacturer's prescribing information for administration and dosage details and any applicable Black Box warnings.

**BENEFIT APPLICATION**

Subject to the terms and conditions of the applicable benefit contract, the applicable drug(s) identified in this policy is (are) covered under the prescription drug benefits of the Company's products when the medical necessity criteria listed in this pharmacy policy are met. Any services that are experimental/investigational or cosmetic are benefit contract exclusions for all products of the Company.

**References:**


**Applicable Drugs:**
Inclusion of a drug in this table does not imply coverage. Eligibility, benefits, limitations, exclusions, precertification/referral requirements, provider contracts, and Company policies apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generic</th>
<th>Brand</th>
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<tr>
<td>Droxidopa</td>
<td>Northera</td>
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**Cross References:**