



CRA July 2021 Newsletter

Greetings!

The California Rheumatology Alliance remains dedicated to providing updated news and resources to our membership. We appreciate and encourage any feedback to assist in our service to our members.

If there are any topics you are interested in and would like for us to cover via webinar, please email info@calrheum.org.

[Visit our Website](#)

SAVE THE DATE: 2021 CRA ANNUAL MEETING

We're happy to announce that we're back + looking forward to our upcoming meeting this year! Please save the date for the 17th Annual Medical & Scientific Meeting that will be held in conjunction with the UCLA Carl Pearson Symposium

October 8 - 12, 2021
Marina del Rey Marriott
Marina del Rey, CA

More information coming soon!

UPCOMING CRA WEBINAR

We invite you to RSVP and Save the Date for an upcoming CRA webinar titled, "A COVID-19 Vaccine Conversation: Update on the Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine and Building Patients' Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccines"

Wednesday, August 4, 2021
6pm - 7pm PT

The webinar will be presented by Michael Dutro, PharmD, BCPS/Pfizer Vaccines Medical Director.

[Click here to RSVP today!](#)

IMPORTANT MEDICARE PART B REIMBURSEMENT CHANGES

As a follow-up to our e-blast we sent last week regarding the reimbursement rate changes for CIMZIA LYO and ORENCIA effective July 1, 2021, please review the following updates below:

To meet the implementation date, required by section 405, CMS has applied the lesser-of methodology to the payment limit calculations for billing and payment codes representing certolizumab pegol and abatacept (J0717 and J0129, respectively). These have been incorporated into the July 2021 ASP Drug Pricing Files and a notation of the lesser-of methodology has been included in the July 2021 ASP Pricing File.

Cimzia Lyo:

As a result of CMS' new Medicare Part B payment structure, the acquisition price from Q2 2021 CIMZIA LYO inventory of \$2,681.94¹ may not be fully covered by the Q3 2021 CMS Medicare Part B Payment Allowance of \$2609.20. You may wish to consider this change in CMS calculation in determining how much CIMZIA to purchase in June.

Orencia:

The currently released Q3 2021 ASP Payment Limit for Orencia IV utilizes this "lesser of" methodology, and reflects a payment limit that excludes the self-administered formulation (Orencia SC). The new Q3 ASP is \$1,133.08 versus \$1,445.78 in Q2.

CIGNA FORMULARY CHANGE RE: REMICADE

An issue has been brought to CRA's attention by some of our physicians on a Cigna policy change. Cigna has sent out letters to providers notifying them of their plan, effective July 1, 2021, to move Remicade to non-preferred status in favor of Avsola and Inflectra. This is causing significant problems for patients who may already have an authorization to receive Remicade beyond July 1st as well as raising significant concerns related to non-medical switching. CRA has met with the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) to bring this to their attention and they are currently reviewing the legality of this policy change. CRA has also issued letters to both Cigna and the DMHC voicing our concern for this change and its impact on our patients.

Please click the links below to view our letters:

[CRA Letter to Cigna](#)

[CRA Letter to the Department of Managed Health Care \(DMHC\)](#)

If you have any questions or would like additional information on any of these bills, please contact Tim Madden at madden@mqadvocacy.com.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The California Legislature is now headed into the second half of the legislative year.

As we have discussed, [AB 347 \(Arambula\)](#) is being co-sponsored by CRA, Arthritis Foundation, and Crohn's and Colitis Foundation to establish standard exceptions to step therapy, require decisions on prior authorization and step therapy exception requests be done with 72 hours or 24 hours for exigent situations, and require the payers' use a physician who is of the same or similar specialty as the treating physician when reviewing an appeal to a step therapy exception request.

The bill is set to be heard on July 7th in the Senate Health Committee. CRA President, Samy Metyas, MD is set to testify in support of the bill. The intensity around the lobbying on this bill is picking up as the health plans are starting to push hard to make changes. The advocacy team which includes a coalition of more than 65 organizations are working hard to keep the bill moving forward.

Other bills CRA is tracking include:

- [SB 568 \(Pan\)](#) would lower out-of-pocket costs for consumers by requiring certain medicines and benefits used to treat chronic disease be covered without subjecting patients to a deductible. This bill is awaiting a hearing in the Assembly Health Committee. **CRA supports this bill.**
- [AB 1278 \(Nazarian\)](#) would require physicians to provide patients a list of companies they have received payments or transfers of value and then have the patient sign the document. CRA has had multiple meetings with the author's office and are discussing possible alternative approaches although no proposals have been solidified. The bill will be heard in the Senate Business and Professions Committee on July 12th. **CRA continues to oppose this bill.**
- [SB 250 \(Pan\)](#) would provide a process for physicians who have a record of appropriate authorizations for medical treatment and prescribing to avoid going through burdensome prior authorization processes. This bill is awaiting a hearing in the Assembly Health Committee. **CRA supports this bill.**

If you have any questions or would like additional information on any of these bills, please contact Tim Madden at madden@mqadvocacy.com.

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