

Additional Options As Two Antidepressants Gain Generic Approval

Wellbutrin XL® and Paxil CR® antidepressants now have generic alternatives available for the treatment of mental health disorders. Bupropion extended-release and paroxetine HCl were recently approved by the FDA and will be available in pharmacies soon.

Bupropion extended-release is the new generic alternative to the popular brand-name Wellbutrin XL, manufactured by GlaxoSmithKline, is typically prescribed to treat major depressive disorder, prevent major depressive episodes and seasonal affective disorder. Bupropion extended-release is available in 150 mg and 300 mg tablets. Wellbutrin XL 150 mg tablets, had industry sales of \$906 million in 2007.

Generic Paxil CR, paroxetine HCl, is manufactured by Mylan and typically prescribed for the treatment of depression, panic disorder and social anxiety disorder and premenstrual dysphoric disorder. Following a settlement between GlaxoSmithKline and Mylan, Mylan has been awarded a 180-day period of marketing exclusivity for paroxetine HCl as 15.5 mg, 25 mg and 37.5 mg tablets. Following this 180 days, we can expect to see other generic alternatives become available as well. Annual sales for Paxil CR are approximately \$301 million.

Increased generic utilization decreases prescription benefit costs as well as member out-of-pocket expenses. As we continue to see generics become available on the market, Benecard looks to promote the use of these lower cost alternatives which are just as safe and effective as their brand-name counterpart. Benecard will communicate this information to our clients by Tuesday, June 17th. We encourage you to share this information with your clients and their cardmembers as well.

In accordance with most state laws, the change from brand to generic tablets will occur at the pharmacy without the prescriber's intervention since it is not actually a product change. It is suggested that patients taking either of these 2 brands should consult with their healthcare provider to determine if there will be a benefit to changing their prescribed brand-name medication to the generic alternative.

Please note: If the plan has a mandatory generic, dispense as written, or a preferred medication program, members may experience a change in co-pay if they continue to utilize the brand-name medication Wellbutrin XL or Paxil CR. Having a generic version of the medication available changes the status of a medication from a single source brand to a multi-source brand and therefore the co-pay changes.

Annual sales

for

Paxil CR®

and

Wellbutrin XL®

total

more than

\$1,200,000.