

## STEP THERAPY POLICY

- POLICY:** Alzheimer's – Namenda/Namenda XR Step Therapy Policy
- Namenda® (memantine tablets and oral solution – Allergan, generics)
  - Namenda XR® (memantine extended-release capsules – Allergan)

**REVIEW DATE:** 11/11/2020

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### OVERVIEW

Memantine tablets, memantine oral solution, and Namenda XR are indicated for the **treatment of moderate to severe dementia of the Alzheimer's type**.<sup>1,2</sup> Memantine tablets and oral solution are dosed twice daily (BID), and Namenda XR is dosed once daily (QD). Memantine and Namenda XR can be taken with or without food. Namzaric® (memantine extended-release and donepezil capsules) is a fixed-dose combination containing donepezil and Namenda XR.<sup>3</sup> This policy does not further detail Namzaric; the Alzheimer's Step Therapy policy which addresses the acetylcholinesterase inhibitors (ChIs) [donepezil, rivastigmine, galantamine] includes Namzaric.

Memantine is an N-methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA) receptor antagonist.<sup>1</sup> Persistent activation of central nervous system NMDA receptors by the excitatory amino acid glutamate has been hypothesized to contribute to the symptoms experienced by patients with Alzheimer's disease. Memantine is thought to exert its therapeutic effect through its action as a low to moderate affinity noncompetitive NMDA receptor antagonist which binds preferentially to the NMDA receptor-operated cation channels. No evidence has demonstrated that memantine prevents or slows neurodegeneration in patients with Alzheimer's disease.

### 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. Note: Generic memantine extended-release capsules are not included in either Step 1 or Step 2 of this program.

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

**Step 1:** generic memantine tablets, generic memantine oral solution

**Step 2:** Namenda tablets, Namenda oral solution, Namenda XR

### CRITERIA

1. If the patient has tried one Step 1 Product, approve a Step 2 Product.
2. No other exceptions are recommended.

### REFERENCES

1. Namenda® tablets and oral solution [prescribing information]. Madison, NJ: Allergan USA, Inc.; November 2018.

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2. Namenda XR<sup>®</sup> extended-release capsules [prescribing information]. Madison, NJ: Allergan USA, Inc.; November 2019.
3. Namzaric<sup>®</sup> capsules [prescribing information]. Cincinnati, OH: Forest Laboratories, Inc.; July 2016.