BlueCross BlueShield Federal Employee Program

FIRDAPSE (amifampridine)

RATIONALE FOR INCLUSION IN PA PROGRAM

Background

Firdapse (amifampridine) is a broad-spectrum potassium channel blocker used to treat Lambert-Eaton myasthenic syndrome (LEMS). LEMS is a rare autoimmune disorder that affects the connection between nerves and muscles and causes weakness and other symptoms in affected patients. LEMS may be associated with other autoimmune diseases, but more commonly occurs in patients with cancer such as small cell lung cancer, where its onset precedes or coincides with the diagnosis of cancer (1-2).

Regulatory Status

FDA-approved indication: Firdapse is a potassium channel blocker indicated for the treatment of Lambert-Eaton myasthenic syndrome (LEMS) in adult and pediatric patients 6 years of age and older (1).

Firdapse can cause seizures. Seizures may be dose-dependent. The concomitant use of Firdapse and drugs that lower the seizure threshold may lead to an increased risk of seizures. Discontinuation or dose-reduction of Firdapse should be considered in patients who have a seizure while on treatment. Firdapse is contraindicated in patients with a history of seizures (1).

The safety and effectiveness of Firdapse in pediatric patients less than 6 years of age have not been established (1).

Summary

Firdapse (amifampridine) is a broad-spectrum potassium channel blocker used to treat Lambert-Eaton myasthenic syndrome (LEMS). Firdapse can cause seizures so concomitant use with medications that lower the seizure threshold could increase the risk of seizures. The safety and effectiveness of Firdapse in pediatric patients less than 6 years of age have not been established (1).

Prior authorization is required to ensure the safe, clinically appropriate, and cost-effective use of Firdapse while maintaining optimal therapeutic outcomes.

References

1. Firdapse [package insert]. Coral Gables, FL: Catalyst Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; May 2024.
2. Firdapse Press Announcement. FDA News Release. November 28, 2018. https://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm627093.htm.