

# Evaluating Utilization Patterns, Financial Impact, and Access Delay Caused By Reimbursement Criteria on Public Drug Plans for PrimaryCare Topical Treatments in Canada: Case Study with HP/TAZ Combination for Plaque Psoriasis

Nadeau F<sup>2</sup>, Feener S<sup>1</sup>, Barbeau M<sup>1</sup>, Savoie M<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Bausch Health, Canada Inc., Laval, QC, Canada; <sup>2</sup> Université de Montréal, Montréal, QC, Canada

## Introduction

Psoriasis is a chronic auto-immune skin disorder that can have substantial implications on quality of life. Provincial reimbursement criteria aim to control utilization and reduce costs; however, they can also hinder timely access to therapies and impose a provincial administrative burden.

## Objective

This study aims to assess the financial impact of removing reimbursement criteria through the case study of HP/TAZ, a topical combination treatment for plaque psoriasis with special authorization criterion in Alberta

## Methods and Materials

- Units and costs were collected from IQVIA PharmaStat and DeltaPA and listing status for year 2023 were retrieved from provincial formularies for the provinces of Alberta, Ontario, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.
- HP/TAZ market shares were calculated in these provinces to have a reference point where HP/TAZ is listed as regular benefit.
- Based on their respective costs per treatment day and market shares in Alberta, the weighted average cost per treatment day for HP/TAZ combination comparators was calculated. The drug costs for HP/TAZ and its combination comparators were calculated by multiplying the number of treatments in Alberta by the costs per treatment. Alberta public drug costs, should a regular benefit listing be obtained, were estimated and compared to the current scenario to determine provincial financial impact.
- A survey, which was sent to Alberta dermatologists, and a literature search were used to incorporate the costs associated with the pre-authorization and renewal process in the estimation of the administrative costs related to the HP/TAZ reimbursement criterion.
- To determine financial impact, the annual administrative provincial costs of HP/TAZ criterion in Alberta were compared with the annual public provincial drug costs that would be generated by a utilization increase, should HP/TAZ criterion be removed.

## Methods and Materials

Based on the financial impact, the percentage of reduction that should be applied on HP/TAZ wholesale price for criterion to be cost-neutral for Alberta was estimated the administrative costs and access delays of the special authorization reimbursement criterion in Alberta, which were compared with the cost of transferring the HP/TAZ listing from a special authorization criterion to a regular benefit.

## Results

Table 1 illustrates the variation in topical combination plaque psoriasis treatment coverage by showing that all products are listed as general benefit in all provinces, except for HP/TAZ in Alberta which had a special authorization listing.

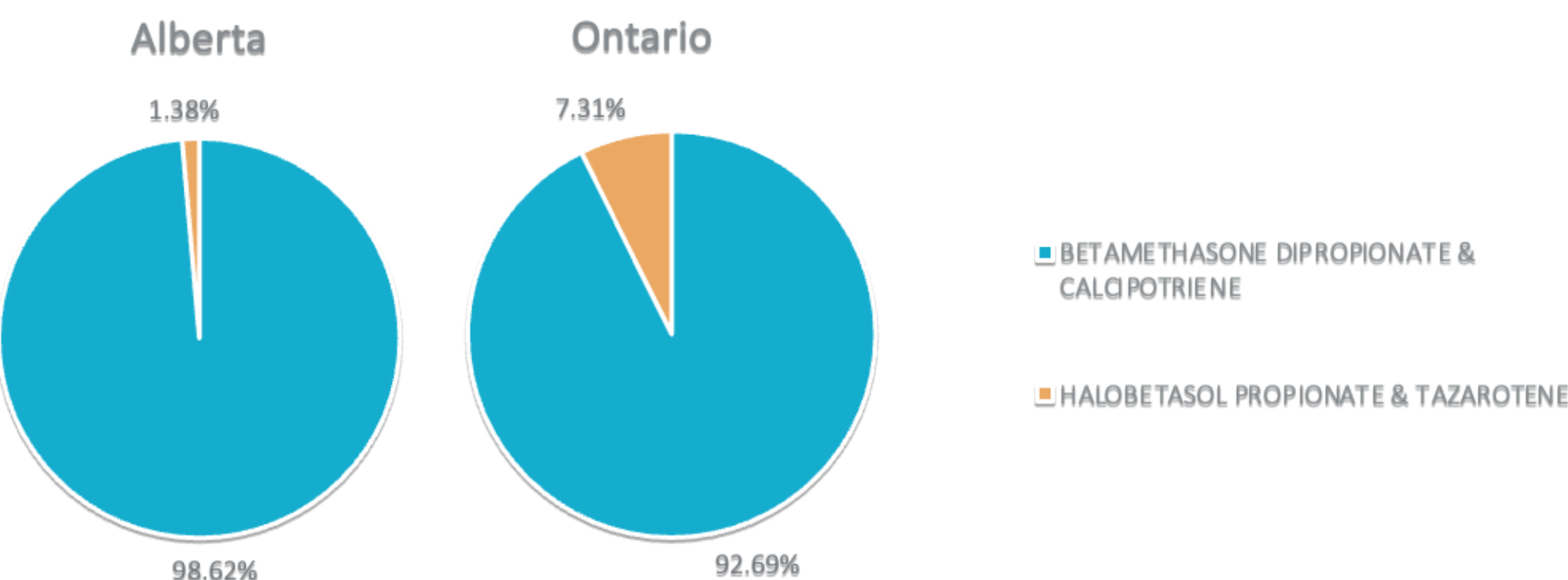
Table 1. Provincial Public Listings of Topical Combination Treatments for Plaque Psoriasis

Generic Name	Form	AB	ON	MB	SK
HP/TAZ	Lotion (Brand)	SA	GB	GB	GB
Betamethasone dipropionate & calcipotriene	Foam (Brand)	RB	GB*	GB	GB
	Ointment (Brand)	RB	GB**	GB	GB
	Gel (Brand)	RB	GB**	GB	GB
	Ointment (Generic)	RB	GB**	GB	GB
	Gel (Generic)	RB	GB**	GB	GB

**LEGEND**  
SA : Special Authorization  
RB/GB : Regular Benefit/General Benefit  
\* Therapeutic note : For use in patients with psoriasis who have failed 1st line topical steroids and brand calcipotriol therapy.  
\*\* Therapeutic note : For the treatment of moderate to severe scalp psoriasis in patients who have failed first-line topical corticosteroid therapy.  
For the treatment of mild to moderate body psoriasis in patients who have failed first-line topical corticosteroid therapy and brand calcipotriol therapy

HP/TAZ is used 5.4 times more in Ontario, where it is listed as a regular benefit, when compared to Alberta, where it is listed with a special authorization criteria (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Public Market Shares (Q1-Q4 2023) for HP/TAZ and its Combination Comparators



## Results

Table 2. Total Incremental Difference in Annual Public Provincial Costs with HP/TAZ Criterion Removal in Alberta

Scenario	Drug Product	Reference Scenario	Base-Case Scenario	Worst-Case Scenario	Best-Case Scenario
Public Provincial Drug Costs	Other Combo Comparators	\$1 353 593,55	\$1 272 150,59	\$1 244 700,43	\$1 299 600,75
	HP/TAZ	\$24 125,00	\$128 003,87	\$163 016,00	\$92 991,74
	TOTAL	\$1 377 718,55	\$1 400 154,45	\$1 407 716,42	\$1 392 592,48
Drug Costs Incremental Difference vs Reference Scenario		-	\$22 435,91	\$29 997,88	\$14 873,94
Public Provincial Administrative Costs	HP/TAZ Criteria	-	\$12 951,89	\$20 734,55	\$9 194,13
	Other	-	-	-	-
Total Incremental Difference With Criteria Removal		-	\$9 484,02	\$9 263,32	\$5 679,81

Drug wholesale prices as of March 2024, Units data for Q1-Q4 2023

For the base-case scenario, the expected additional drug costs resulting from the special authorization criterion removal surpassed the Alberta criterion's administrative costs by \$9,484.02 (Table 2).

According to clinical expert opinion, the access delays averaged 10 days (Table 3).

Table 3. Survey Questions Sent to Alberta Dermatologists, Anonymized Abridged Results and Data Points Used in Administrative Costs Analysis

Survey Questions	Data points for sensitivity analysis			Units
	Base-Case Scenario (Average of the collected answers)	Best-Case Scenario (Min)	Worst-Case Scenario (Max)	
1. How much time, in average, would you estimate is required to fill out Duobrii Special Authorization Form (ABC 60094)?	6	1	10	Mins
a. In general, who, on your team, is responsible for filling out Duobrii Special Authorization Form (ABC 60094)?	MD 31%	0	100%	%
	Nurse 69%	100%	0	%
2. In average, how quickly would you say the patient can get his medication following the submission of the HP/TAZ topical lotion Special Authorization Request Form (ABC 60094)?	10	3	21	Days
3. Following the submission of the HP/TAZ topical lotion Special Authorization Request Form (ABC 60094), to your knowledge, what is the percentage of rejection/the number of resubmissions needed?	18%	5%	35%	%

## Conclusion

- HP/TAZ reimbursement criterion removal would increase the cost minimally for Alberta within the current environment.
- Should a product listing agreement be in place allowing a discount greater or equal to 10% on HP/TAZ drug price, this could make the removal of its special authorization criteria in Alberta a cost-saving alternative for the province, while optimizing patient access.
- The findings and recommendations resulting from this study could contribute to informed decision-making to improve access and the utilization of topical treatments in Canada.