

Dear Members of the West Virginia DUR Board,

I am writing to express my support for Auvelity as a preferred formulary medication for the treatment of Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) in West Virginia. As you know, MDD is one of the most prevalent mental disorders in the United States, with over 21 million Americans experiencing an episode each year. Ensuring access to effective treatments for our patients is vital.

I was concerned to see a medication-specific protocol for Auvelity in the recent Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee (P&T) recommendations. This novel oral therapy is indicated for MDD but faces unnecessary hurdles. The requirement for documentation of individual failure with its active ingredients, dextromethorphan and bupropion, along with the need for patients to “step through” seven other products, is neither logical nor appropriate for this patient population.

The Star-D trial highlights that the chance of achieving response and remission dramatically declines with each subsequent medication trial, particularly with standard antidepressants. Forcing patients to endure at least 42 weeks of likely ineffective treatments before accessing Auvelity places them at risk of prolonged suffering.

Dextromethorphan is commonly found in over-the-counter cough medications and is not indicated for MDD. While bupropion is available in various formulations, the low dosage in Auvelity is unique and critical for patient safety and efficacy. Recommending these agents individually to improve mental health is not a viable option, and the requirement to step through multiple medications is not only burdensome but could also be ethically problematic.

Medication adherence is crucial in treating depression, and these barriers to Auvelity hinder access to an effective treatment option. As a healthcare provider in West Virginia, my primary goal is to enhance the health and lives of my patients, many of whom face significant challenges due to MDD.

I urge the committee to reconsider these burdensome requirements and prioritize Auvelity’s inclusion in the formulary. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

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