

Auvelity (Dextromethorphan and Bupropion)

Disclaimer

Clinical guidelines are developed and adopted to establish evidence-based clinical criteria for utilization management decisions. Clinical guidelines are applicable according to policy and plan type. The Plan may delegate utilization management decisions of certain services to third parties who may develop and adopt their own clinical criteria.

Coverage of services is subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of a member's policy, as well as applicable state and federal law. Clinical guidelines are also subject to in-force criteria such as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) national coverage determination (NCD) or local coverage determination (LCD) for Medicare Advantage plans. Please refer to the member's policy documents (e.g., Certificate/Evidence of Coverage, Schedule of Benefits, Plan Formulary) or contact the Plan to confirm coverage.

Summary

Auvelity (dextromethorphan hydrobromide and bupropion hydrochloride), is an oral combination product indicated for the treatment of major depressive disorder (MDD) in adults. Major depressive disorder is a mental health disorder that causes symptoms of sadness, hopelessness, and loss of interest in things. It can disrupt relationships and everyday activities, such as work, school, and activities that are usually pleasant. There are many medications from several classes that are available to treat major depressive disorder including selective serotonin-reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), serotonin- and norepinephrine-reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs), tricyclic antidepressants, monoamine oxidase (MAO) inhibitors, and other antidepressants (e.g., bupropion, mirtazapine, trazodone).

Definitions

"Major depressive disorder", also known as (MDD), is a psychiatric condition characterized by persistent low mood, low energy, or loss of interest in enjoyable activities causing substantial impairment in daily life. MDD is thought to be caused by a combination of genetic, environmental and psychological factors. Risk factors include family history, major life changes, certain medications, chronic health problems, and substance use disorders.

“Neurotransmitter” is a molecule that sends signals from neurons to different parts of the body (e.g., muscles).

Medical Necessity Criteria for Initial Authorization

The Plan considers Auvelity (Dextromethorphan and Bupropion) medically necessary when ALL of the following criteria are met:

1. The member is 18 years of age or older; *AND*
2. The member has a diagnosis of major depressive disorder (MDD); *AND*
3. The member is unable to use or has tried and failed TWO (2) therapies, each from a different drug class for at least six (6) weeks each:
 - a. Noradrenergic and dopaminergic antidepressants (bupropion); *and/or*
 - b. Noradrenergic and specific serotonin antidepressants (e.g., mirtazapine); *and/or*
 - c. Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (e.g., citalopram, escitalopram, fluoxetine, paroxetine, sertraline); *and/or*
 - d. Serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (e.g., duloxetine, venlafaxine IR/ER); *and/or*
 - e. Tricyclic antidepressants (e.g., amitriptyline, nortriptyline); *AND*
4. Clinical chart documentation is provided for review to substantiate the above listed requirements.

If the above prior authorization criteria are met, the requested medication will be approved for up to a lifetime.

Experimental or Investigational / Not Medically Necessary

Auvelity (Dextromethorphan and Bupropion) for any other indication is considered not medically necessary by the Plan, as it is deemed to be experimental, investigational, or unproven. Non-covered indications include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Alzheimer’s disease agitation. There are few studies to support the safety and efficacy of Auvelity (Dextromethorphan and Bupropion) for Alzheimer’s disease agitation. A similar drug, Nuedexta (dextromethorphan and quinidine) is on the 2023 Beers Criteria for Potentially Inappropriate Medications. It is stated that Nuedexta (dextromethorphan and quinidine) may increase the risk of falls and drug-drug interactions (quinidine, like bupropion, is CYP2D6 inhibitor).
- Smoking cessation. There is not enough evidence to support the safety and efficacy of Auvelity (Dextromethorphan and Bupropion) for the management of smoking cessation. One unpublished study (NCT03471767) with 58 participants did not find a statistically significant difference in the primary outcome of change in smoking behavior.

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