NHS
Cheshire and Merseyside

Area Prescribing Group report

Date: Friday 03 January 2025 **Quorate**: Yes

The items in this report are supported by the area prescribing group and approval by NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB) is detailed below.

Document links provided for any APG recommendations are temporarily hosted on the legacy Pan Mersey APC website as a pragmatic solution until such time as a Cheshire and Merseyside APG website is available. The legacy Cheshire formulary will also be updated to reflect these changes.

CMAPG governance documents are now hosted on the new Prescribing section of the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside website.

New medicines NICE TAs

Proposal	Notes	Approval
Bevacizumab gamma for treating wet age-related macular degeneration **RAG designation**: Red **APG subgroup**: 13 December 2024 **APG**: 03 January 2025	**Date of NICE TA publication**: 04 December 2024 **Approval for implementation**: 30 days **Deadline for implementation**: 03 January 2025 Red RAG rating to be assigned in formulary, in line with NICE TA1022. Tariff-excluded high cost drug for specialist use only. Bevacizumab gamma is another treatment option for wet age-related macular degeneration and is an alternative to aflibercept, faricimab and ranibizumab. A cost comparison by NICE suggests bevacizumab gamma has similar costs and overall health benefits to	**ICB Medicines Optimisation and Pharmacy (MOP) Group:** 16 January 2025, approved by MOP group.

Proposal	Notes	Approval
	aflibercept. Therefore, implementation of the NICE TA is expected to be cost neutral. It is acknowledged that unlicensed bevacizumab may be used for other non-NICE ophthalmology indications, and this will be addressed separately.	

New medicines other

Proposal	Notes	Approval
NICE approved Anti-VEGF drugs and intravitreal corticosteroids used in Ophthalmic Medical Retinal conditions **RAG designation**: Red **APG subgroup**: 13 December 2024 **APG**: 03 January 2025	Minor update to include NICE TA1022. There has also been an amendment to the use of dexamethasone for macular oedema secondary to CRVO or BRVO, in line with TA229, which corrects a previous oversight on the statement.	**ICB Medicines Optimisation and Pharmacy (MOP) Group:** 16 January 2025, approved by MOP group.

Formulary and guidelines

Proposal	Notes	Approval
Spironolactone 12.5mg tablets for congestive cardiac failure – formulary addition **RAG designation**: Green **APG subgroup**: 10 December 2024 **APG**: 03 January 2025	Addition of spironolactone 12.5mg tablets to current formulary entry for spironolactone 25mg, 50mg and 100mg. RAG designation Green. Inclusion of the following wording agreed with Cheshire and Merseyside Cardiac Network: *"Where possible, for optimal clinical effectiveness, spironolactone should be titrated to 25mg daily. If a lower dose is required (symptomatic hypotension/hyperkalaemia/frailty), prescribe spironolactone 25mg on alternate days rather*	**ICB Medicines Optimisation and Pharmacy (MOP) Group:** 16 January 2025, clinically supported by MOP group. **ICS Director of Finance:** 21 January 2025, approved by Executive Director of Finance (Interim)

Proposal	Notes	Approval
	than 12.5mg tablets daily due to the significant increased cost. Spironolactone 12.5mg tablets should only be prescribed if alternate day spironolactone cannot be tolerated (symptomatic hypotension/poor adherence). Consider referral to the local Heart Failure team/MDT for discussion." It was agreed that this information will be included on ScriptSwitch to inform primary care prescribers. It will also be disseminated to secondary care clinicians via the provider Chief Pharmacists. The Cardiac Network has confirmed that it will also be included in the Cheshire and Merseyside Heart Failure pathway when updated. Current annual cost of spironolactone 12.5mg tablets prescribed in Cheshire and Merseyside is £140,000. If 10% of patients currently prescribed 25mg tablets were changed to 12.5mg tablets the additional cost would be £185,415 annually. The newly licensed spironolactone liquid is noted and will be considered by the FGSG.	
Sodium bicarbonate capsules 500mg – RAG designation for metabolic acidosis in renal impairment. **RAG Designation**: Amber Retained **APG subgroup**: 10 December 2024 **APG**: 03 January 2025	Standard sodium bicarbonate 500mg capsules for specific indication of metabolic acidosis in renal impairment to be designated as amber retained in line with recently agreed Nephrotrans® (sodium bicarbonate 500mg gastro-resistant capsules) RAG designation for this indication. Annotate formulary entry with comment that standard capsules are first choice and Nephrotrans is reserved for patients who do not tolerate the gastrointestinal adverse effects of standard sodium bicarbonate capsules. RAG designation for other	**ICB Medicines Optimisation and Pharmacy (MOP) Group:** 16 January 2025, approved by MOP group.

Proposal	Notes	Approval
	indications remains Green. Standard capsules are less expensive than Nephrotrans®.	

APG reports

Title	Notes	Approval
NICE TA adherence checklist November 2024	For noting.	**ICB Medicines Optimisation and Pharmacy (MOP) Group:** 16 January 2025, noted by MOP group.