

BRIEFING NOTE: POTENTIAL HYDROXYUREA SHORTAGE

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SUMMARY:

There are three suppliers of hydroxyurea capsules in the Canadian marketplace. The Apotex brand is currently on backorder with no estimated return date. The Mylan brand is currently on backorder with an estimated return date of October 11, 2019. The Bristol-Myers Squibb brand is currently on allocation, with an estimated end date of November 29, 2019.

There are variable supplies remaining at BC Cancer Centres and Community Oncology Network (CON) sites, and hydroxyurea capsules may run out prior to the release dates.

BACKGROUND:

Hydroxyurea is funded by BC Cancer for the treatment of various myeloid and lymphoid neoplasms, including polycythemia vera, essential thrombocythemia, myelofibrosis, and acute myeloid leukemia.

RECOMMENDATION:

As a mitigation strategy, BC Cancer Centres and CON sites should reduce the total quantity dispensed to ensure that there is sufficient drug for all patients currently using hydroxyurea.

Patients can be switched to alternative, second-line treatment options as noted below, with the exact dosing at the discretion of the prescriber. Note that transitions from hydroxyurea to alternative treatments may be challenging due to individual dosing considerations and the side effect profiles of the second line agents. Transitions may result in a period of destabilization with increased risk of thrombosis, hemorrhage, and clinical symptoms.

Current Treatment	Alternative Treatment Options		
LEUKEMIA			
LKNOS	Consult Leukemia Tumour Group, and/or consider:		
	Polycythemia vera	Peginterferon alfa-2a	LKPEGIFN
		Ruxolitinib	ULKPCVRUX – CAP required
		Phlebotomy alone	
	Essential thrombocythemia	Anagrelide	LKANAG
		Peginterferon alfa-2a	LKPEGIFN
	Myelofibrosis	Ruxolitinib	ULKMFRUX – CAP required
	Acute myeloid leukemia	Etoposide, oral	LKNOS
6-mercaptopurine		LKNOS	
LYMPHOMA			
LYNOS	Consult Lymphoma Tumour Group		

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Please contact the Provincial Pharmacy Drug Information Line at 604-877-6000 extension 676275 for more information.