HFS
Illinois Department of
Healthcare and Family Services

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Drug and Therapeutics Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date | Time: Thursday, January 8, 2026 | 8:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Location: This meeting was held virtually on the WebEx Platform.

Audience: Drug and Therapeutics Advisory Board

Board Members Present:
Chair (*)

Paul Berkowitz
Nicole Florence
Arvind Goyal
Lisa Green
Garry Moreland
Mahesh Patel*
Maurice Shaw
Steven R. Sproat
Pamela Vergara-Rodriguez

HFS and UIC Staff Present:

Claudia Colombo
Melissa Davis
Jennifer DeWitt
Thomas Dorn
Arvind Goyal
Brianna Hudak
Jose Jimenez
Mary Moody
Chintan Patel
Jen Phillips
Michael Welton

Absences Recorded:
None.

I. **Call to Order**: The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Dr. Mahesh C. Patel, on Thursday, January 8, 2026, at 8:31 AM via the WebEx Platform.

II. **Roll Call of Board Members**: Dr. Patel, facilitated roll call of board members. **Quorum was confirmed**.

III. **Announcements**: Dr. Janet Albers resigned from the board effective December 2025.

IV. **Conflict of Interest Declaration and Approval of Agenda**:

A. No D&T Advisory Board members had conflicts of interest pertinent to the agenda.

B. Maurice Shaw requested to move Xromi from PDL Drug Appeals to New Drug Initial Review on today's agenda. Dr. Patel called for a motion to approve the change to the agenda. Gary Moreland moved to approve the change. The motion was seconded by Arvind Goyal. No oppositions. No abstentions. **Motion carried**.

V. **Review and Approval Meeting Minutes**: Dr. Patel called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from October 9, 2025. Arvind Goyal moved to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Nicole Florence. No oppositions. No abstentions. **Motion carried**.

VI. **Preferred Drug List (PDL) Drug Appeals**:

A. Drug: **Rinvoq** (upadacitinib):

i. Dr. Manish Jain, Ravenswood Rheumatology, spoke on behalf of the manufacturer, advocating for preferred status on the Illinois Preferred Drug List (PDL). Dr. Jain indicated he had a conflict of interest.

ii. Jen Phillips, Department Clinical Pharmacist, provided a review of the most recent clinical guidelines (no recommendation for one agent in this class over another) and efficacy and safety of Rinvoq.

iii. Board discussion: multiple indications compared to others within the class; discussion around safety with this specific agent, Dr. Jain provided expert insight around less concern for black box warning compared to others within the class; agent has been on market since 2019 so safety signals have had ample time to manifest. Board also requested information on market share; about half of requests in this class are for this agent.

iv. Pamela Vergara-Rodriguez called for a motion to consider moving Rinvoq from the non-preferred list to the preferred, with prior authorization, list. Nicole Florence moved to approve the motion to move to preferred drug list, with prior authorization. The motion was seconded by Lisa Green. No oppositions. No abstentions. **Motion carried**.

B. Drug: **Journavx** (suzetrigine):

i. Jessica Jay, Vertex Pharmaceuticals, spoke on behalf of the manufacturer, reviewing clinical trials that brought agent to market, advocating for preferred status on the PDL.

ii. Jen Phillips, Department Clinical Pharmacist, provided a review on the most recent clinical guidelines (agent not currently discussed in guidelines due to recent FDA approval) and efficacy and safety of Journavx.

iii. Board discussion: indication for acute post-operative pain, which typically lasts <7 days. Board expressed limited experience with this agent. Minimal requests for this agent for Medicaid patients. Board recommended real-world study of this agent concurrently with opioids to see if opioid sparing; and use among patients with opioid use disorder to examine efficacy. Dr. Jay stated interim analysis evaluating opioid-sparing benefits. Discussion around its lack of applicability to real-world acute pain management.

iv. Arvind Goyal called the Question. Mahesh Patel moved to approve leaving Journavx on the non-preferred list. The motion was seconded by Gary Moreland. No oppositions. No abstentions. **Motion carried**.

VII. New Drug Appeals:

A. Drug: **Cobenfy** (xanomeline and trospium):

i. Dr. Mitchell Glaser, Glaser & Randhawa Mental Health Group, LLC, spoke to the appeal, advocating for Cobenfy to be moved to preferred status on the PDL.

ii. Jen Phillips, Department Clinical Pharmacist, provided a review on the most recent clinical guidelines and efficacy and safety of Cobenfy.

iii. Board discussion: positive side effect profile, and positive impact on negative symptoms of schizophrenia. Discussion around PDL status of other antipsychotic agents; most, besides long acting injectables, are preferred without PA.

iv. Paul Berkowitz called for a motion that Cobenfy be moved to preferred, with no prior authorization required, drug list. Seconded by Arvind Goyal. No oppositions. No abstentions. **Motion carried**.

VIII. Provider Requested Reviews: No requests registered.

IX. Drug Class Review: Calcitonin Gene-Related Peptide (CGRP) Antagonists

A. Presentation by Jen Phillips, Department Clinical Pharmacist, on the most recent clinical guidelines and the efficacy and safety of calcitonin gene-related peptide (CGRP) antagonists.

B. Neelesh Nadkarni, Abbvie, spoke on behalf of the manufacturer, regarding Ubrelvy and Qulipta.

C. Lori Blackner, Pfizer, spoke on behalf of the manufacturer, regarding Nurtec and about Zavzpret.

D. Jasmine Inman, Teva, spoke on behalf of the manufacturer, regarding Ajovy.

E. Board members discussed clinical equivalence and tolerability amongst all CGRP agents. Discussion around need for PA for this class to ensure meeting clinical guidelines for number of headaches/month.

F. Pamela Vergara-Rodriguez called for a motion to move non-preferred drugs Zavzpret and Vyepti to the preferred, with prior-authorization, drug list. Seconded by Paul Berkowitz. No oppositions. No abstentions. **Motion carried**.

X. New Drug Initial Review:

A. Drug: **Xromi** (hydroxyurea oral solution)

i. Jen Phillips, Department Clinical Pharmacist, provided a review on the most recent clinical guidelines and efficacy and safety of Xromi.

ii. Keith Boesen, Rare Disease Therapeutics, spoke on behalf of the manufacturer, regarding Xromi. Dr. Boesen clarified this agent is FDA approved for pediatric patients 6 months and older.

iii. Lewis Hsu, UIC and Sickle Cell Disease Association of Illinois, also spoke on behalf of the Sickle Cell Disease Association of Illinois (SCDAI), regarding Xromi.

iv. Board members discussed importance of providing easy access to medication to patients to treat sickle cell disease; access to a commercially available liquid formulation (non-compounded) is particularly important for pediatric patients who cannot swallow tablets/capsules.

v. Pamela Vergara-Rodriguez called a motion to approve moving Xromi to the preferred, with no prior-authorization, drug list. Arvind Goyal seconded motion. No oppositions. No abstentions. **Motion carried**.

B. Drug: **Erzofri** (paliperidone palmitate)

i. Jen Phillips, Department Clinical Pharmacist, provided a review on the most recent clinical guidelines and efficacy and safety of Erzofri.

ii. Tayler-Frances Chapman, Luye Pharma, spoke on behalf of the manufacturer, regarding Erzofri.

iii. Board members discussed Erzofri in comparison to other paliperidone long-acting injectable preparations; one benefit discussed was not needing a loading dose (e.g., can start monthly dosing right away versus a second dose within 1 week as with other formulations). Side effect profile reported to be the same as other long acting agents, per Dr. Chapman.

iv. Pamela Vergara-Rodriguez called a motion to approve moving Erzofri to the preferred, with prior-authorization, drug list. Paul Berkowitz seconded the motion. No oppositions. No abstentions. **Motion carried**.

C. Drug: **Crenessity** (crinecerfont)

i. To preserve time, moving Crenessity to next agenda.

XI. Public Comments: None.

XII. Additional Business Old & New:

A. **Vote on 2026 Meeting Dates**: The proposed meeting dates for 2026 are: April 9, July 9, and October 8. Dr. Patel called for a motion to agree to the proposed 2026 meeting dates. The motion was seconded by Gary Moreland. No oppositions. No abstentions. **Motion carried**.

B. Due to Dr. Albers vacating role on board, there is now a vacancy for the Vice Chair role. Board members urged to contact the UIC/HFS staff if they are interested in the Vice Chair role. Will vote on Vice Chair at the next meeting.

XIII. Future Agenda Preview:

A. Add **Crenessity** to next meeting agenda.

B. Vote on Vice Chair at next meeting.

C. The next D&T meeting is scheduled for April 9, 2026.

XIV. HFS Department Updates: None.

XV. Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 11:00 AM.

A. **Motion**: Mahesh Patel called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Nicole Florence moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Arvind Goyal. No oppositions. No abstentions. **Motion carried**.

Approved by the D&T Advisory Board on: 4/9/26