

## STEP THERAPY POLICY

**POLICY:** Angiotensin Receptor Blocker Step Therapy Policy

Single-Entity Products

- Arbli™ (losartan oral suspension – Scinture)
- Atacand® (candesartan tablets – AstraZeneca/Ani, generic)
- Avapro® (irbesartan tablets – sanofi-aventis, generic)
- Benicar® (olmesartan tablets – Cosette, generic)
- Cozaar® (losartan tablets – Organon, generic)
- Diovan® (valsartan tablets – Novartis, generic)
- Edarbi® (azilsartan tablets – Takeda/Azurity)
- eprosartan tablets (generic only)
- Micardis® (telmisartan tablets – Boehinger-Ingelheim, generic)
- valsartan oral solution (generic only)

Combination Products

- Atacand HCT® (candesartan/hydrochlorothiazide tablets – AstraZeneca, generic)
- Avalide® (irbesartan/hydrochlorothiazide tablets – sanofi-aventis, generic)
- Azor® (olmesartan/amlodipine tablets – Cosette, generic)
- Benicar HCT® (olmesartan/hydrochlorothiazide tablets – Cosette, generic)
- Diovan HCT® (valsartan/hydrochlorothiazide tablets – Novartis, generic)
- Edarbyclor® (azilsartan/chlorthalidone tablets – Takeda/Arbor)
- Exforge® (valsartan/amlodipine tablets – Novartis, generic)
- Exforge HCT® (valsartan/amlodipine/hydrochlorothiazide tablets – Novartis, generic)
- Hyzaar® (losartan/hydrochlorothiazide tablets – Merck, generic)
- Micardis® HCT (telmisartan/hydrochlorothiazide tablets – Boehringer Ingelheim, generic)
- Tribenzor® (olmesartan/amlodipine/hydrochlorothiazide tablets – Cosette, generic)

**REVIEW DATE:** 06/18/2025; selected revision 07/30/2025

---

### OVERVIEW

Angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs) [also known as angiotensin II receptor antagonists] are all indicated for the treatment of adults with **hypertension**; selected agents are also indicated for use in pediatric patients.<sup>1-8</sup> Some ARBs have other indications as well. Several clinical outcome trials with ARBs have shown positive results. All ARBs, except Edarbi, are also available as combination products with hydrochlorothiazide (HCTZ).<sup>9-14</sup> Edarbi is available as a combination product containing chlorthalidone (Edarbyclor).<sup>15</sup> There are several products that combine an ARB with amlodipine (plus or minus HCTZ); these products are indicated for the treatment of hypertension.<sup>16-20</sup>

Valsartan oral solution is indicated for the following uses:<sup>21</sup>

- Treatment of **hypertension** in adults and children  $\geq 6$  years of age, to lower blood pressure.
- Management of **heart failure** (New York Heart Association [NYHA] Class II to IV) to reduce the risk of hospitalization for heart failure in patients who are unable to swallow valsartan tablets.
- **Reduce the risk of cardiovascular death** in clinically stable patients with left ventricular failure or left ventricular dysfunction following myocardial infarction in patients who are unable to swallow valsartan tablets.

### POLICY STATEMENT

---

This program has been developed to encourage the use of a Step 1 Product prior to the use of a Step 2 Product. If the Step Therapy rule is not met for a Step 2 Product at the point of service, coverage will be determined by the Step Therapy criteria below. All approvals are provided for 1 year in duration.

**Automation:** A patient with a history of one Step 1 Product within the 130-day look-back period is excluded from Step Therapy.

**Step 1:** generic candesartan tablets, generic candesartan/HCTZ tablets, generic eprosartan tablets, generic irbesartan tablets, generic irbesartan/HCTZ tablets, generic losartan tablets, generic losartan/HCTZ tablets, generic olmesartan tablets, generic olmesartan/amlodipine tablets, generic olmesartan/HCTZ tablets, generic olmesartan/amlodipine/HCTZ tablets, generic telmisartan tablets, generic telmisartan/amlodipine tablets, generic telmisartan/HCTZ tablets, generic valsartan tablets, generic valsartan/amlodipine tablets, generic valsartan/HCTZ tablets, generic valsartan/amlodipine/hydrochlorothiazide tablets

**Step 2:** Atacand, Atacand HCT, Arbli, Avalide, Avapro, Azor, Benicar, Benicar HCT, Cozaar, Diovan, Diovan HCT, Edarbi, Edarbyclor, Exforge, Exforge HCT, Hyzaar, Micardis, Micardis HCT, Tribenzor, valsartan oral solution

## CRITERIA

1. If the patient has tried one Step 1 Product, approve a Step 2 Product.
2. If the patient cannot swallow or has difficulty swallowing tablets, approve valsartan oral solution or Arbli.
3. No other exceptions are recommended.

## REFERENCES

1. Diovan<sup>®</sup> tablets [prescribing information]. East Hanover, NJ: Novartis; April 2021.
2. Avapro<sup>®</sup> tablets [prescribing information]. Bridgewater, NJ: sanofi-aventis; May 2025.
3. Cozaar<sup>®</sup> tablets [prescribing information]. Jersey City, NJ: Organon; April 2023.
4. Atacand<sup>®</sup> tablets [prescribing information]. Baudette, MN and Sodertalje, Sweden: ANI and AstraZeneca; December 2022.
5. Micardis<sup>®</sup> tablets [prescribing information]. Ridgefield, CT: Boehringer Ingelheim; December 2022.
6. Benicar<sup>®</sup> tablets [prescribing information]. South Plainfield, NJ: Cosette; February 2022.
7. Edarbi<sup>®</sup> tablets [prescribing information]. Woburn, MA: Takeda and Azurity; January 2024.
8. Hyzaar<sup>®</sup> tablets [prescribing information]. Jersey City, NJ: Organon; March 2023.
9. Diovan<sup>®</sup> HCT tablets [prescribing information]. East Hanover, NJ: Novartis; April 2021.
10. Avalide<sup>®</sup> tablets [prescribing information]. Bridgewater, NJ: sanofi-aventis; May 2025.
11. Atacand HCT<sup>®</sup> tablets [prescribing information]. Baudette, MN and Sodertalje, Sweden: ANI and AstraZeneca; August 2020.
12. Micardis HCT<sup>®</sup> tablets [prescribing information]. Ridgefield, CT: Boehringer Ingelheim; December 2022.
13. Benicar HCT<sup>®</sup> tablets [prescribing information]. South Plainfield, NJ: Cosette; February 2022.
14. Edarbyclor<sup>®</sup> tablets [prescribing information]. Osaka, Japan and Atlanta, GA: Takeda and Arbor; March 2020.
15. Exforge<sup>®</sup> tablets [prescribing information]. East Hanover, NJ: Novartis; April 2021.
16. Exforge<sup>®</sup> HCT tablets [prescribing information]. East Hanover, NJ: Novartis; February 2021.
17. Azor<sup>®</sup> tablets [prescribing information]. South Plainfield, NJ: Cosette; February 2022.
18. Tribenzor<sup>®</sup> tablets [prescribing information]. South Plainfield, NJ: Cosette; February 2022.
19. Valsartan oral solution [prescribing information]. Baudette, MN: ANI; August 2023.
20. Arbli<sup>™</sup> oral suspension [prescribing information]. Commack, NY: Scienture; March 2025.

## HISTORY

Type of Revision	Summary of Changes	Review Date
------------------	--------------------	-------------

# Angiotensin Receptor Blocker Step Therapy Policy

Page 3

Annual Revision	No criteria changes.	11/08/2023
Annual Revision	<p><b>Prexxartan:</b> Prexxartan was removed as a Step 2 Product (not available).</p> <p><b>Valsartan oral solution:</b> Valsartan oral solution was listed as a Step 2 Product.</p> <p><b>Criteria:</b> The exception to approve Prexxartan if the patient cannot swallow or has difficulty swallowing tablets was changed to approve valsartan oral solution if the patient cannot swallow or has difficulty swallowing tablets.</p>	10/02/2024
Early Annual Revision	<p><b>Twynsta:</b> Twynsta was removed as a Step 2 Product (not available).</p> <p><b>Criteria:</b> The exception to approve a Step 2 Product if the patient met ALL of the following criteria was removed from the policy: the generic equivalent is not available in Step 1 AND patient was hospitalized and discharged within the previous 30 days for a cardiovascular event AND patient has been started on stabilized on a Step 2 product.</p>	06/18/2025
Selected Revision	<p><b>Arbli oral suspension:</b> Arbli was listed as a Step 2 Product.</p> <p><b>Criteria:</b> Arbli was added to the exception to approve a Step 2 Product if the patient cannot swallow or has difficulty swallowing tablets.</p>	07/30/2025