

5.21.185

Section:	Prescription Drugs	Effective Date:	April 1, 2022
Subsection:	Antineoplastic Agents	Original Policy Date:	December 3, 2021
Subject:	Besremi	Page:	1 of 5

Last Review Date: March 11, 2022

Besremi

Description

Besremi (ropeginterferon alfa-2b-njft)

Background

Besremi (ropeginterferon alfa-2b-njft) belongs to the class of type I interferons, which exhibit their cellular effects in polycythemia vera in the bone marrow by binding to a transmembrane receptor termed interferon alfa receptor (IFNAR). Binding to IFNAR initiates a downstream signaling cascade through the activation of kinases, in particular Janus kinase 1 (JAK1) and tyrosine kinase 2 (TYK2) and activator of transcription (STAT) proteins. Nuclear translocation of STAT proteins controls distinct gene-expression programs and exhibits various cellular effects. The actions involved in the therapeutic effects of interferon alfa in polycythemia vera are not fully elucidated (1).

Regulatory Status

FDA-approved indication: Besremi is an interferon alfa-2b indicated for the treatment of adults with polycythemia vera (1).

Besremi contains a boxed warning regarding the risk of serious disorders. Interferon alfa products may cause or aggravate fatal or life-threatening neuropsychiatric, autoimmune, ischemic, and infectious disorders. Patients should be closely monitored with periodic clinical and laboratory evaluations. Therapy should be withdrawn in patients with persistently severe or worsening signs or symptoms of these conditions. In many, but not all cases, these disorders resolve after stopping therapy (1).

Besremi is contraindicated in patients with: (1)

Section:	Prescription Drugs	Effective Date:	April 1, 2022
Subsection:	Antineoplastic Agents	Original Policy Date:	December 3, 2021
Subject:	Besremi	Page:	2 of 5

- Existence of, or history of severe psychiatric disorders, particularly severe depression, suicidal ideation, or suicide attempt
- Moderate (Child-Pugh B) or severe (Child-Pugh C) hepatic impairment
- History or presence of active serious or untreated autoimmune disease
- Immunosuppressed transplant recipients

Besremi also contains warnings regarding the following: depression and suicide, endocrine toxicity, cardiovascular toxicity, decreased peripheral blood counts, hypersensitivity reactions, pancreatitis, colitis, pulmonary toxicity, ophthalmologic toxicity, hyperlipidemia, hepatotoxicity, renal toxicity, dental and periodontal toxicity, dermatologic toxicity, and driving and operating machinery (1).

Besremi can cause fetal harm when administered to a pregnant woman. Pregnancy testing is recommended in females of reproductive potential prior to treatment with Besremi. Females of reproductive potential should be advised to use an effective method of contraception during treatment with Besremi and for at least 8 weeks after the final dose (1).

A complete blood count (CBC) should be performed regularly, every 2 weeks during the titration phase and every 3-6 months during the maintenance phase. CBC should be monitored more frequently if clinically indicated. Phlebotomy as rescue treatment to normalize blood hyperviscosity may be necessary during the titration phase (1).

The safety and effectiveness of Besremi in pediatric patients less than 18 years of age have not been established (1).

Related policies

Intron A, Pegasys

Policy

This policy statement applies to clinical review performed for pre-service (Prior Approval, Precertification, Advanced Benefit Determination, etc.) and/or post-service claims.

Besremi may be considered **medically necessary** in patients age 18 years of age or older with polycythemia vera and if the conditions indicated below are met.

Besremi may be considered **investigational** in patients less than 18 years of age and for all other indications.

Prior-Approval Requirements

Section:	Prescription Drugs	Effective Date:	April 1, 2022
Subsection:	Antineoplastic Agents	Original Policy Date:	December 3, 2021
Subject:	Besremi	Page:	3 of 5

Age 18 years of age and older

Diagnosis

Patient must have the following:

1. Polycythemia vera

AND ALL of the following:

- a. Prescriber agrees to monitor CBC as indicated during therapy
- b. Prescriber agrees to monitor for **ALL** of the following:
 - i. Neuropsychiatric disorders
 - ii. Autoimmune disorders
 - iii. Ischemic disorders
 - iv. Infectious disorders
- c. Females of reproductive potential **only**: patient will have pregnancy testing completed before starting treatment with Besremi and patient will be advised to use effective contraception during treatment with Besremi and for 8 weeks after the final dose

AND NONE of the following:

- a. Existence of, or history of severe psychiatric disorders, particularly severe depression, suicidal ideation, or suicide attempt
- b. Moderate or severe hepatic impairment (Child-Pugh Class B or C)
- c. History or presence of active serious or untreated autoimmune disease
- d. Immunosuppressed transplant recipient

Prior – Approval *Renewal* Requirements

Age 18 years of age and older

Diagnosis

Patient must have the following:

1. Polycythemia vera

AND ALL of the following:

- a. Patient has had improvement in hematological parameters (e.g., hematocrit, platelets, or leukocytes)

Section:	Prescription Drugs	Effective Date:	April 1, 2022
Subsection:	Antineoplastic Agents	Original Policy Date:	December 3, 2021
Subject:	Besremi	Page:	4 of 5

- b. Prescriber agrees to monitor CBC as indicated during therapy
- c. Prescriber agrees to monitor for **ALL** of the following:
 - i. Neuropsychiatric disorders
 - ii. Autoimmune disorders
 - iii. Ischemic disorders
 - iv. Infectious disorders
- d. Females of reproductive potential **only**: patient will be advised to use effective contraception during treatment with Besremi and for 8 weeks after the final dose

AND NONE of the following:

- a. Existence of, or history of severe psychiatric disorders, particularly severe depression, suicidal ideation, or suicide attempt
- b. Moderate or severe hepatic impairment (Child-Pugh Class B or C)
- c. History or presence of active serious or untreated autoimmune disease
- d. Immunosuppressed transplant recipient

Policy Guidelines

Pre - PA Allowance

None

Prior - Approval Limits

Quantity 6 syringes per 84 days

Duration 12 months

Prior – Approval *Renewal* Limits

Same as above

Rationale

Summary

Besremi (ropeginterferon alfa-2b-njft) is a type I interferon which binds to a transmembrane receptor, interferon alfa receptor (IFNAR). It is indicated for use in adult patients with polycythemia vera. Besremi has many warnings and precautions including the risk of serious disorders, including psychiatric disorders; embryo-fetal toxicity; and decreased peripheral blood

5.21.185

Section:	Prescription Drugs	Effective Date:	April 1, 2022
Subsection:	Antineoplastic Agents	Original Policy Date:	December 3, 2021
Subject:	Besremi	Page:	5 of 5

counts. The safety and effectiveness of Besremi in pediatric patients less than 18 years of age have not been established (1).

Prior authorization is required to ensure the safe, clinically appropriate and cost-effective use of Besremi while maintaining optimal therapeutic outcomes.

References

1. Besremi [package insert]. Burlington, MA: PharmaEssentia USA Corporation; November 2021.
2. NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology® Myeloproliferative Neoplasms (Version 2.2021). National Comprehensive Cancer Network, Inc. August 2021. Accessed on January 14, 2022.

Policy History

Date	Action
December 2021	Addition to PA
March 2022	Annual review and reference update

Keywords

This policy was approved by the FEP® Pharmacy and Medical Policy Committee on March 11, 2022 and is effective on April 1, 2022.