

## Commercial/Healthcare Exchange Step Criteria

Effective: January 1, 2021

**Step Therapy Name:** Antidepressants

**Step 1 Agent(s):** escitalopram, citalopram, fluoxetine, fluvoxamine immediate-release, paroxetine IR, sertraline, duloxetine, venlafaxine ER capsule, desvenlafaxine succinate ER tablet, venlafaxine IR tablet

**Step 2 Agent(s):** Viibryd tablet, Fetzima Er capsule, venlafaxine hcl er tablet, Pexeva tablet, Paxil 10mg/5ml suspension, desvenlafaxine er tablet, Trintellix tablet, fluvoxamine ER capsule

**Medication/Class Description:**

Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) are oral antidepressant agents that are not chemically related to tricyclic, tetracyclic, or other available antidepressants. The antidepressant action of the SSRIs is assumed to be linked to their inhibition of CNS neuronal uptake of serotonin (5HT). They may also have a weak effect on norepinephrine and dopamine neuronal reuptake. Most SSRIs have little affinity for muscarinic, gamma aminobutyric acid (GABA), benzodiazepine, alpha1, alpha2, beta-adrenergic, dopamine (D2), 5-HT1, 5-HT2, and histamine (H1) receptors.

Serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs) differ from selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) in that they also inhibit the reuptake of norepinephrine, as the class name indicates, but their potency with regard to serotonin reuptake inhibition is comparable to that of the SSRIs.

**Required Medical Information:**

1. Previous medications tried/failed

**Age Restrictions:** N/A

**Prescriber Restrictions:** N/A

**Coverage Duration:** 12 months

**Exceptions for Stepped Medications**

- A. Patient has had an adequate trial and failure of TWO Step 1 Agents, defined as:
  - a. Failure to decrease/improve symptoms; **OR**
- B. Patient has an intolerance to TWO Step 1 Agents, defined as (but not limited to):
  - a. Allergic reaction
  - b. Adverse drug reactions.

**References:**

1. Pexeva [package insert]. Miami, FL: Noven Therapeutics; January 2012.
2. Viibryd (R) oral tablets, vilazodone HCl oral tablets. Allergan USA, Inc. (per manufacturer), Irvine, CA, 2016.
3. Paxil (R) oral tablets, suspension, paroxetine hydrochloride oral tablets, suspension. GlaxoSmithKline, Research Triangle Park, NC, 2010.
4. Trintellix oral tablets, vortioxetine oral tablets. Takeda Pharmaceuticals (per FDA), Deerfield, IL, 2016
5. Fetzima (levomilnacipran) [prescribing information]. Irvine, CA: Allergan USA Inc; December 2017.

## Policy Revision history

<b>Rev #</b>	<b>Type of Change</b>	<b>Summary of Change</b>	<b>Sections Affected</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	New Policy	New Policy	All	1/1/2021