

# Ambien<sup>®</sup> (zolpidem tartrate) Available Generically

On April 23, 2007, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) granted final approval for several pharmaceutical manufacturers to market generic versions of Ambien (zolpidem tartrate) immediate-release tablets. Zolpidem tartrate is a non-benzodiazepine sedative-hypnotic indicated for the short-term treatment of insomnia. The extended-release product, Ambien CR, is not currently available as a generic medication.

## AVAILABILITY

Zolpidem will be available in 5mg and 10mg tablets.

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

- Ambien (in both the immediate-release and controlled-release forms) ranked ninth in the top 10 medications by cost for 2006.

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- Ambien, in all forms, was the number one sedative-hypnotic by transaction and cost for 2006. It accounted for 69 percent of total sedative-hypnotic costs and 62 percent of total sedative-hypnotic transactions.
- Ambien products accounted for 2.6 percent of total medication costs, with Ambien immediate-release tablets accounting for 1.9 percent of total drug expenditures in 2006.
- In 2006, the AWP increased by 33.3 percent for Ambien 5mg and by 21.3 percent for Ambien 10mg. These increases have made current AWP prices the same, regardless of tablet strength.
- The AWP per tablet is \$4.59 for the generic formulation and \$5.13 for brand name Ambien. This represents a decrease of 11.7 percent.
- Using carriers' current Ambien use and pricing structures (whether Tmesys<sup>®</sup> or mail order), an average total decrease in Ambien immediate-release expenditure was calculated at 15.5 percent.
- With Ambien immediate-release comprising 1.9 percent of total medication expenses and generic zolpidem providing an average decrease of 15.5 percent, this translates into an overall reduction of 0.3 percent in total medication expenses. Utilizing zolpidem also avoids the continuing 20 to 30 percent increase in AWP that brand name Ambien has experienced every year. Generic formulations are less likely to have future AWP increases.

## CONCLUSION

Zolpidem is expected to be a high-impact generic medication due to the high use of Ambien. PMSI encourages the use of generic medications as first-line therapy when appropriate and allowable by law and will continue to pursue opportunities to encourage generic utilization by both prescribers and injured workers.

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## REFERENCES

- Clinical Pharmacology, "Ambien." Available at <http://www.cpip.gsm.com>. Accessed April 23, 2007.
- FDA Press Release, "FDA Approves First Generic Versions of Ambien (Zolpidem Tartrate) for the Treatment of Insomnia" <http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2007/NEW01616.html>. Released April 22, 2007.