Raptiva (efalizumab) and Progressive Multifocal Leukoencephalopathy (PML)

- On February 19, 2009, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released a Public Health Advisory regarding use of Raptiva (efalizumab) and the increased risk of PML.¹
- The European Medicines Agency (EMEA) recommended suspension of the marketing of Raptiva (efalizumab) due to:
  - Modest benefits²;
  - Other potential serious side effects (i.e., Guillain-Barre and Miller-Fisher syndromes, encephalitis, encephalopathy, meningitis, sepsis, and opportunistic infections)²;
  - Lack of evidence to identify a group of patients where benefits of treatment with Raptiva (efalizumab) outweigh the risks²;
  - Lack of safety and effectiveness data on patients immunocompromised from previous treatments and with no other treatment options².
- PML cases have been reported between September 2008 and January 2009 in patients 47-75 years of age with moderate to severe plaque psoriasis receiving ongoing treatment with Raptiva (efalizumab) for greater than 3 years.¹,³
  - 3 confirmed cases with 2 deaths;¹,³
  - 1 possible case resulting in death.¹,³
  - None of the above patients were receiving any other immunosuppressive drugs concomitantly.¹
- Raptiva (efalizumab) was approved by the FDA in 2003 for the treatment of moderate to severe plaque psoriasis.¹
- Clinical trials at the time of approval did not show any cases of PML (N=2764).¹
- In October 2008, FDA requested for the manufacturers of Raptiva to:
  - Include a BOXED WARNING in the labeling that describes the risk for life-threatening infections, such as PML; and
  - Establish a Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS).¹
- As FDA continues to review the latest information, the agency recommends that healthcare providers:
  - Inform patients using Raptiva (efalizumab) of the potential risk of developing PML.¹
  - Inform patients there are no known screening tests that can reliably predict PML or medical interventions that can prevent or treat this disease.
  - Monitor and periodically evaluate patients being treated with Raptiva (efalizumab) for the onset of neurologic symptoms.¹
  - Discontinue Raptiva (efalizumab) if PML is suspected.¹
  - Educate patients on possible symptoms of PML (i.e., unusual weakness, loss of coordination, changes in vision, difficulty speaking, personality changes) and if these changes occur, to contact their provider and/or seek care immediately.¹

REFERENCES

ACTIONS:
- **Facility COS:** Forward this document to all appropriate providers who prescribe this agent (e.g., primary care providers, dermatologists, and rheumatologists including contract providers, etc.). In addition, forward to the Associate Chief of Staff (ACOS) for Research and Development (R&D). Forward to other VA employees as deemed appropriate.
- **ACOS for R&D:** Forward this document to Principal Investigators (PIs) who have authority to practice at the facility and to your respective Institutional Review Board (IRB).