RATIONALE FOR INCLUSION IN PA PROGRAM

Background
Tumor necrosis factor-alpha (TNF-α) is a protein produced by the body's immune system. In certain autoimmune diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis (RA), ankylosing spondylitis, psoriatic arthritis, and ulcerative colitis, there is an overproduction of TNF-α which causes the immune system to attack parts of the body (1). Simponi and Simponi ARIA works by binding to the tumor necrosis factor (TNF), which prevents the binding of TNF-α to its receptors and reducing the inflammation (2).

Regulatory Status
FDA-approved indication: Simponi and Simponi ARIA are tumor necrosis factor (TNF) blockers indicated for the treatment of:

- **Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)** - **Simponi** and **Simponi ARIA**, in combination with methotrexate, are indicated for the treatment of adult patients with moderately to severely active rheumatoid arthritis.

- **Psoriatic Arthritis (PsA)** - **Simponi**, alone or in combination with methotrexate, is indicated for the treatment of adult patients with active psoriatic arthritis.

- **Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS)** - **Simponi** is indicated for the treatment of adult patients with active ankylosing spondylitis (and axial spondyloarthritis).

- **Ulcerative Colitis** – **Simponi** is indicated in adult patients with moderately to severely active ulcerative colitis who have demonstrated corticosteroid dependence or who have had an inadequate response to or failed to tolerate oral aminosalicylates, oral corticosteroids, azathioprine, or 6-mercaptopurine for inducing and maintaining clinical response, improving endoscopic appearance of the mucosa during induction, inducing clinical remission, achieving and sustaining clinical remission in induction responders (2).

Simponi and Simponi ARIA carry boxed warnings regarding serious infections and malignancies. Because Simponi and Simponi ARIA suppress the immune system, patients are at a greater risk for getting serious infections leading to hospitalization or death, including tuberculosis (TB), invasive fungal infections, and infections due to other opportunistic pathogens. Lymphoma and
other malignancies have been reported in children and adolescent patients treated with TNF blockers. Simponi and Simponi ARIA are not indicated for use in pediatric patients (2).

Patients should be screened for latent tuberculosis infection. Patients at risk for hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection should be evaluated for evidence of prior HBV infection. Hepatitis B virus carriers should be monitored for reactivation during and several months after therapy. Simponi and Simponi ARIA should not be used in combination with other biologic agents. Simponi and Simponi ARIA should not be initiated in patients with an active infection. Simponi and Simponi ARIA should be discontinued if a patient develops a serious infection during treatment (2).

For the treatment of RA, Simponi and Simponi ARIA should be used with methotrexate (MTX) or other conventional disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARD). Since the presence or absence of concomitant MTX did not appear to influence the efficacy or safety of Simponi and Simponi ARIA in the treatment of PsA or AS, Simponi and Simponi ARIA can be used with or without MTX in the treatment of PsA and AS (2).

An increased risk of serious infections has been seen in clinical RA trials of other TNF-blockers used in combination with anakinra or abatacept, with no added benefit; therefore, use of Simponi and Simponi ARIA with abatacept or anakinra is not recommended. A higher rate of serious infections has also been observed in RA patients treated with rituximab who received subsequent treatment with a TNF-blocker. The concomitant use of Simponi and Simponi ARIA with biologics is not recommended because of the possibility of an increased risk of infection (2).

Safety and effectiveness of Simponi and Simponi ARIA in pediatric patients less than 18 years of age has not been established (2).

**Summary**
Simponi and Simponi ARIA are FDA-approved for the treatment of adult patients with moderate to severe RA, PsA or AS who have had an inadequate response or intolerance to conventional therapy. Simponi and Simponi ARIA are indicated for use in combination with methotrexate (MTX) or other conventional DMARD to treat rheumatoid arthritis (RA). Simponi is indicated as monotherapy or in combination with MTX in Psoriatic Arthritis (PsA). Simponi is indicated in adult patients with moderately to severely active ulcerative colitis who have demonstrated corticosteroid
dependence or who have had an inadequate response to or failed to tolerate oral aminosalicylates, oral corticosteroids, azathioprine, or 6-mercaptopurine for inducing and maintaining clinical response, improving endoscopic appearance of the mucosa during induction, inducing clinical remission, achieving and sustaining clinical remission in induction responders. Simponi and Simponi ARIA carry a boxed warning due to increased risk of serious infections and malignancies (2).

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

References