

# Difelikefalin (KORSUVA)

## Criteria for Use

### September 2022

VA Pharmacy Benefits Management Services, Medical Advisory Panel, and VISN Pharmacist Executives

*The following recommendations are based on medical evidence, clinician input, and expert opinion. The content of the document is dynamic and will be revised as new information becomes available. The purpose of this document is to assist practitioners in clinical decision-making, to standardize and improve the quality of patient care, and to promote cost-effective drug prescribing. THE CLINICIAN SHOULD USE THIS GUIDANCE AND INTERPRET IT IN THE CLINICAL CONTEXT OF THE INDIVIDUAL PATIENT. INDIVIDUAL CASES THAT ARE EXCEPTIONS TO THE EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION CRITERIA SHOULD BE ADJUDICATED AT THE LOCAL FACILITY ACCORDING TO THE POLICY AND PROCEDURES OF ITS P&T COMMITTEE AND PHARMACY SERVICES.*

The Product Information should be consulted for detailed prescribing information.

See the VA National PBM-MAP-VPE Monograph on this drug at the [PBM INTRAnet](#) site for further information.

### Exclusion Criteria

If the answer to the following is met, then the patient should NOT receive difelikefalin.

- Pruritus attributed to cause other than end-stage kidney disease
- Severe hepatic impairment

### Inclusion Criteria

All of the following criteria must be met.

- Care is provided by a VA / VA Community Care nephrologist
- End-stage kidney disease receiving hemodialysis three times per week
- Moderate-to-severe pruritus<sup>1</sup> associated with chronic kidney disease despite optimized management of condition<sup>2</sup>
- Inadequate benefit from trial of topical emollients and/or topical analgesic agents (e.g., capsaicin, pramoxine)
- Inadequate benefit from trial of gabapentin (or pregabalin, if gabapentin not tolerated)<sup>3</sup>

1. Clinical trial inclusion criteria: weekly mean score of more than 4 points on the 24-hour Worst Itching Intensity Numerical Rating Scale (WI-NRS)
2. Optimization of dialysis, management of hyperparathyroidism and hyperphosphatemia
3. Trial of oral antihistamines, and/or alternate agents (e.g., montelukast, sertraline) or phototherapy may also be useful in managing symptoms and considered on an individual basis