Welireg® (belzutifan) – New indication

- On May 14, 2025, Merck announced the FDA approval of Welireg (belzutifan), for the **treatment of adult and pediatric patients 12 years and older with locally advanced, unresectable, or metastatic pheochromocytoma or paraganglioma (PPGL)**.

- Welireg is also approved for the treatment of von Hippel-Lindau disease and advanced renal cell carcinoma.

- PPGL are rare tumors that come from the same tissue, but pheochromocytoma form in the adrenal gland and paraganglioma form outside the adrenal gland. The condition affects up to 2,000 people each year in the U.S.

- The approval of Welireg for the new indication was based on LITESPARK-015, an open-label, multi-cohort study in 72 patients in Cohort A1 who had measurable disease, documented histopathological diagnosis of PPGL, locally advanced or metastatic disease that was not amenable to surgery or curative treatment. Patients received Welireg until disease progression or unacceptable toxicity. The major outcome measure was objective response rate (ORR). Additional outcome measures were duration of response (DOR) and time to response (TTR).

    - **The ORR was 26%** (95% CI: 17, 38).
    - The median DOR was 20.4 months (95% CI: 8.3, not reached).
    - The median TTR was 11.0 months (range 1.7 to 24.8).

- Welireg carries a boxed warning for **embryo-fetal toxicity**.

- The most common adverse reactions (≥ 25%), including laboratory abnormalities, with Welireg use were anemia, fatigue, musculoskeletal pain, decreased lymphocytes, increased alanine aminotransferase, increased aspartate aminotransferase, increased calcium, dyspnea, increased potassium, decreased leukocytes, headache, increased alkaline phosphatase, dizziness, and nausea.

- The recommended dosage of Welireg in adult patients is 120 mg administered orally once daily. The recommended dosage of Welireg in pediatric patients 12 years and older is based on bodyweight: patients weighing ≥ 40 kg: 120 mg orally once daily; and patients weighing < 40 kg: 80 mg orally once daily.

    - Welireg should be continued until disease progression or unacceptable toxicity.