

Oncology Medication Clinical Coverage

Policy Number: 2020D0030S
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[➔ Instructions for Use](#)

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Related Commercial Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denosumab (Prolia® & Xgeva®) • Erythropoiesis-Stimulating Agents • Lemtrada (Alemtuzumab) • Rituximab (Rituxan®, Ruxience®, & Truxima®) • White Blood Cell Colony Stimulating Factors
Community Plan Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oncology Medication Clinical Coverage
Related Clinical Guideline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transplant Review Guidelines: Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation

Coverage Rationale

[➔ See Benefit Considerations](#)

Description

This policy provides parameters for coverage of injectable oncology medications (including, but not limited to octreotide acetate, leuprolide acetate, leucovorin and levoleucovorin), including therapeutic radiopharmaceuticals, covered under the medical benefit based upon the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) Drugs & Biologics Compendium® (NCCN Compendium®). The Compendium lists the appropriate drugs and biologics for specific cancers using US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved disease indications and specific NCCN panel recommendations. Each recommendation is supported by a level of evidence category. Coverage of [White Blood Cell Colony Stimulating Factors](#) and [Erythropoiesis-Stimulating Agents](#) are addressed in separate policies. This policy does not provide coverage criteria for Chimeric Antigen Receptor (CAR)-T Cell products. Coverage determinations are based on the member's benefits and the OptumHealth Transplant Solutions criteria for covered transplants; refer to the Clinical Guideline titled [Transplant Review Guidelines: Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation](#).

Coverage Rationale

Medical Necessity Plans

The [Oncology Products](#) table below lists the UnitedHealthcare preferred oncology products and respective non-preferred products. Coverage will be provided for the UnitedHealthcare preferred oncology product contingent on the coverage criteria in the [Diagnosis-Specific Criteria](#) section.

Coverage for any respective non-preferred oncology product will be provided contingent on the criteria in the [Preferred Product Criteria](#) and the [Diagnosis-Specific Criteria](#) sections. Members new to therapy will be required to utilize the UnitedHealthcare preferred oncology product unless they meet the criteria in this section.

Preferred Product Criteria

Treatment with the respective non-preferred product specified in the [Oncology Products](#) table below is medically necessary for oncology indications when both of the following are met:

- History of intolerance or contraindication to the UnitedHealthcare preferred oncology product; and
- Physician attests that, in their clinical opinion, the same intolerance, contraindication, or adverse event would not be expected to occur with the respective non-preferred product.

Oncology Products

Below are UnitedHealthcare preferred oncology products with therapeutically equivalent and/or biosimilar* non-preferred products as determined by the UnitedHealthcare P&T Committee:

UnitedHealthcare Preferred Oncology Product(s)	UnitedHealthcare Non-Preferred Oncology Product(s)
Mvasi (bevacizumab-awwb)	Avastin (bevacizumab) Zirabev (bevacizumab-bvzr)
Kanjinti (trastuzumab-anns)	Herceptin (trastuzumab) Herceptin Hylecta (trastuzumab and hyaluronidase-oysk) Herzuma (trastuzumab-pkrb) Ogivri (trastuzumab-dkst) Ontruzant (trastuzumab-dttb) Trazimera (trastuzumab-qyyp)
Ruxience (rituximab-pvvr) Truxima (rituximab-abbs)	Rituxan (rituximab) Rituxan Hycela (rituximab/hyaluronidase human, recombinant)
Gemcitabine	Infugem (gemcitabine in sodium chloride injection)
Leucovorin	Levoleucovorin

* Biosimilar means that the biological product is FDA-approved based on data demonstrating that it is highly similar to an already FDA-approved biological product, known as a reference product, and that there are no clinically meaningful differences between the biosimilar product and the reference product.

Diagnosis-Specific Criteria

Injectable Oncology Medications

UnitedHealthcare recognizes indications and uses of injectable oncology medications, including therapeutic radiopharmaceuticals, listed in the NCCN Drugs and Biologics Compendium with Categories of Evidence and Consensus of 1, 2A, and 2B as proven and medically necessary, and Categories of Evidence and Consensus of 3 as unproven and not medically necessary.

UnitedHealthcare will cover all chemotherapy agents for individuals under the age of 19 years for oncology indications. The majority of pediatric patients receive treatments on national pediatric protocols that are quite similar in concept to the NCCN patient care guidelines.

Refer to [Preferred Product Criteria](#) for the UnitedHealthcare preferred oncology products that have therapeutically equivalent and/or biosimilar products available.

Applicable Codes

The following list(s) of procedure and/or diagnosis codes is provided for reference purposes only and may not be all inclusive. Listing of a code in this policy does not imply that the service described by the code is a covered or non-covered health service. Benefit coverage for health services is determined by the member specific benefit plan document and applicable laws that may require coverage for a specific service. The inclusion of a code does not imply any right to reimbursement or guarantee claim payment. Other Policies and Guidelines may apply.

Coding Clarification: The denied drug codes apply to all outpatient places of service (including office, hospital, etc.).

HCPCS Code	Description	Rationale
Denied Drug Codes		
J9219	Leuprolide acetate implant, 65 mg	Product Discontinued

Background

The NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines®) are comprehensive guidelines documenting management decisions and interventions and interventions that apply to malignancies which apply to more than 97% of cancers affecting U.S. patients.

NCCN Categories of Evidence and Consensus

- Category 1: The recommendation is based on high-level evidence (i.e., high-powered randomized clinical trials or meta-analyses), and the panel has reached uniform consensus that the recommendation is indicated. In this context, uniform means near unanimous positive support with some possible neutral positions.
- Category 2A: The recommendation is based on lower level evidence, but despite the absence of higher level studies, there is uniform consensus that the recommendation is appropriate. Lower level evidence is interpreted broadly, and runs the gamut from phase II to large cohort studies to case series to individual practitioner experience. Importantly, in many instances, the retrospective studies are derived from clinical experience of treating large numbers of patients at a member institution, so panel members have first-hand knowledge of the data. Inevitably, some recommendations must address clinical situations for which limited or no data exist. In these instances the congruence of experience-based opinions provides an informed if not confirmed direction for optimizing patient care. These recommendations carry the implicit recognition that they may be superseded as higher level evidence becomes available or as outcomes-based information becomes more prevalent.
- Category 2B: The recommendation is based on lower level evidence, and there is nonuniform consensus that the recommendation should be made. In these instances, because the evidence is not conclusive, institutions take different approaches to the management of a particular clinical scenario. This nonuniform consensus does not represent a major disagreement, rather it recognizes that given imperfect information, institutions may adopt different approaches. A Category 2B designation should signal to the user that more than one approach can be inferred from the existing data.
- Category 3: The recommendation has engendered a major disagreement among the panel members. Several circumstances can cause major disagreements. For example, if substantial data exists about two interventions but they have never been directly compared in a randomized trial, adherents to one set of data may not accept the interpretation of the other side's results. Another situation resulting in a Category 3 designation is when experts disagree about how trial data can be generalized. A Category 3 designation alerts users to a major interpretation issue in the data and directs them to the manuscript for an explanation of the controversy.

Therapeutic radiopharmaceuticals [e.g., Azedra® (iobenguane I 131), Lutathera® (lutetium Lu 177 dotatate), Xofigo® (radium-223)] used to treat cancer are medications that contain radioactive material. The radioactive agent selectively accumulates within the tumor releasing radiation which then kills cancer cells.

Benefit Considerations

If the coverage review using the NCCN Compendium determines that the drug is unproven, then further review is indicated. Some Certificates of Coverage allow for coverage of experimental/investigational/unproven treatments for life-threatening illnesses when certain conditions are met. The member specific benefit plan document must be consulted to make coverage decisions for this service. Some states mandate benefit coverage for off-label use of medications for some diagnoses or under some circumstances. Some states also mandate usage of other Compendium references. Where such mandates apply, they supersede language in the member specific benefit plan document or in this policy.

Chimeric Antigen Receptor (CAR)-T Cell Therapy may be eligible for coverage as an autologous stem cell therapy under a member's Transplantation Services benefit. Coverage determinations are based on the OptumHealth Transplant Solutions

criteria for covered transplants; refer to the Clinical Guideline titled [Transplant Review Guidelines: Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation](#).

Benefit coverage for an otherwise unproven service for the treatment of serious rare diseases may occur when certain conditions are met. See the Policy and Procedure addressing the treatment of serious rare diseases.

References

1. The NCCN Drugs and Biologics Compendium (NCCN Compendium®). http://www.nccn.org/professionals/drug_compendium/content/contents.asp.
2. The NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines®). http://www.nccn.org/professionals/physician_gls/f_guidelines.asp.
3. Pazdur R. Endpoints for assessing drug activity in clinical trials. *Oncologist*. 2008;13 Suppl 2:19-21.
4. Therasse P, Arbuck SG, Eisenhauer EA, et al. New guidelines to evaluate the response to treatment in solid tumors. European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer, National Cancer Institute of the United States, National Cancer Institute of Canada. *J Natl Cancer Inst*. 2000 Feb 2;92(3):205-16.
5. Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. Biosimilars. Retrieved from <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/therapeutic-biologics-applications-bla/biosimilars>.

Policy History/Revision Information

Date	Action/Description
10/01/2020	<p>Coverage Rationale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Revised list of preferred oncology products:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Added “Truxima (rituximab-abbs)”○ Removed “Rituxan (rituximab)”● Revised list of non-preferred oncology products:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Added:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Rituxan (rituximab)▪ Rituxan Hycela (rituximab/hyaluronidase human, recombinant)○ Removed “Truxima (rituximab-abbs)” <p>Supporting Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Archived previous policy version 2020D0030R

Instructions for Use

This Medical Policy provides assistance in interpreting UnitedHealthcare standard benefit plans. When deciding coverage, the member specific benefit plan document must be referenced as the terms of the member specific benefit plan may differ from the standard plan. In the event of a conflict, the member specific benefit plan document governs. Before using this policy, please check the member specific benefit plan document and any applicable federal or state mandates. UnitedHealthcare reserves the right to modify its Policies and Guidelines as necessary. This Medical Policy is provided for informational purposes. It does not constitute medical advice.

This Medical Policy may also be applied to Medicare Advantage plans in certain instances. In the absence of a Medicare National Coverage Determination (NCD), Local Coverage Determination (LCD), or other Medicare coverage guidance, CMS allows a Medicare Advantage Organization (MAO) to create its own coverage determinations, using objective evidence-based rationale relying on authoritative evidence ([Medicare IOM Pub. No. 100-16, Ch. 4, §90.5](#)).

UnitedHealthcare may also use tools developed by third parties, such as the MCG™ Care Guidelines, to assist us in administering health benefits. UnitedHealthcare Medical Policies are intended to be used in connection with the independent professional medical judgment of a qualified health care provider and do not constitute the practice of medicine or medical advice.