Vagus Nerve Stimulation

Policy # 00134
Original Effective Date: 06/05/2002
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Applies to all products administered or underwritten by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana and its subsidiary, HMO Louisiana, Inc. (collectively referred to as the "Company"), unless otherwise provided in the applicable contract. Medical technology is constantly evolving, and we reserve the right to review and update Medical Policy periodically.

When Services Are Eligible for Coverage

Coverage for eligible medical treatments or procedures, drugs, devices or biological products may be provided only if:

- *Benefits are available in the member's contract/certificate, and*
- *Medical necessity criteria and guidelines are met.*

Based on review of available data, the Company may consider vagus nerve stimulation (VNS) as a treatment of medically refractory seizures to be **eligible for coverage.****

Note: Medically refractory seizures are defined as seizures that occur in spite of therapeutic levels of antiepileptic drugs or seizures that cannot be treated with therapeutic levels of antiepileptic drugs because of intolerable adverse events of these drugs.

When Services Are Considered Investigational

Coverage is not available for investigational medical treatments or procedures, drugs, devices or biological products.

Based on review of available data, the Company considers the use of vagus nerve stimulation (VNS) as a treatment in individuals with seizures other than medically refractory seizures to be **investigational.***

Based on review of available data, the Company considers vagus nerve stimulation (VNS) as a treatment for any other condition, including but not limited to depression, heart failure, upper limb impairment due to stroke, essential tremor, headaches, fibromyalgia, tinnitus, and traumatic brain injury to be **investigational.***

Based on review of available data, the Company considers transcutaneous (nonimplantable) vagus nerve stimulation (VNS) devices for all indications to be **investigational.***

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Policy Guidelines

Vagus nerve stimulation has been evaluated for the treatment of obesity.

Background/Overview

Vagus nerve stimulation (VNS) was initially investigated as a treatment alternative in individuals with medically refractory partial-onset seizures for whom surgery is not recommended or for whom surgery has failed. Over time, the use of VNS has expanded to include generalized seizures, and it has been investigated for a range of other conditions.

While the mechanisms for the therapeutic effects of VNS are not fully understood, the basic premise of VNS in the treatment of various conditions is that vagal visceral afferents have a diffuse central nervous system projection, and activation of these pathways has a widespread effect on neuronal excitability. An electrical stimulus is applied to axons of the vagus nerve, which have their cell bodies in the nodose and junctional ganglia and synapse on the nucleus of the solitary tract in the brainstem. From the solitary tract nucleus, vagal afferent pathways project to multiple areas of the brain. VNS may also stimulate vagal efferent pathways that innervate the heart, vocal cords, and other laryngeal and pharyngeal muscles, and provide parasympathetic innervation to the gastrointestinal tract.

Other types of implantable vagus nerve stimulators that are placed in contact with the trunks of the vagus nerve at the gastroesophageal junction are not addressed in this evidence review.

FDA or Other Governmental Regulatory Approval

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

Table 1 includes updates on the U.S. FDA approval and clearance for VNS devices pertinent to this evidence review.

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Table 1. FDA Approved or Cleared Vagus Nerve Stimulators

Device Name	Manufacturer	Approved/ Cleared	PMA/510(k)	Product Code(s)	Indications
NeuroCybernetic Prosthesis (NCP®‡) /VNS Therapy®‡	LIvaNov(Cyberonics)	1997	P970003	LYJ, MUZ	Indicated or adjunctive treatment of adults and adolescents >12 y of age with medically refractory partial-onset seizures
		2005	P970003/S50		Expanded indication for adjunctive long-term treatment of chronic or recurrent depression for individuals ≥18 y of age experiencing a major depressive episode and have not had an adequate response to ≥4 adequate antidepressant treatments
		2017	P970003/S207		Expanded indicated use as adjunctive therapy for seizures in individuals ≥4 y of age with partial-onset seizures that are refractory to

Device Name	Manufacturer	Approved/ Cleared	PMA/510(k)	Product Code(s)	Indications
					antiepileptic medications
gammaCore®‡	ElectroCore	2017/2018	DEN150048/K171306/K173442	PKR, QAK	Indicated for acute treatment of pain associated with episodic cluster and migraine headache in adults using noninvasive VNS on the side of the neck
gammaCore-2®‡, gammaCore-Sapphire®‡	ElectroCore	2017/2018/2021	K172270/K180538/K182369/K191830/K203456/K211856	PKR	Indicated for: Adjunctive use for the preventive treatment of cluster headache in adult individuals. The acute treatment of pain associated with episodic cluster headache in adult individuals. The acute treatment of pain associated with migraine headache in adult individuals. The preventive treatment of migraine headache in adult individuals.

FDA: U.S. Food and Drug Administration; PMA: premarket approval; VNS: vagus nerve stimulation.

Rationale/Source

This medical policy was developed through consideration of peer-reviewed medical literature generally recognized by the relevant medical community, U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval status, nationally accepted standards of medical practice and accepted standards of medical practice in this community, technology evaluation centers, reference to federal regulations, other plan medical policies, and accredited national guidelines.

Stimulation of the vagus nerve can be performed using a pulsed electrical stimulator implanted within the carotid artery sheath. This technique has been proposed as a treatment for refractory seizures, depression, and other disorders. There are also devices available that are implanted at different areas of the vagus nerve. This evidence review also addresses devices that stimulate the vagus nerve transcutaneously.

Summary of Evidence

Vagus Nerve Stimulation

For individuals who have seizures refractory to medical treatment who receive vagus nerve stimulation (VNS), the evidence includes randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and multiple observational studies. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, change in disease status, and functional outcomes. The RCTs have reported significant reductions in seizure frequency for patients with partial-onset seizures. The uncontrolled studies have consistently reported large reductions in a broader range of seizure types in both adults and children. The evidence is sufficient to determine that the technology results in an improvement in the net health outcome.

For individuals who have treatment-resistant depression who receive VNS, the evidence includes 2 RCTs evaluating the efficacy of implanted VNS for treatment-resistant depression compared to sham, 1 RCT comparing therapeutic to low-dose implanted VNS, nonrandomized comparative studies, and case series. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, change in disease status, and functional outcomes. The sham-controlled RCTs only reported short-term results and found no significant improvement in the primary outcome. The low-dose VNS controlled trial reported no statistically

significant differences between the dose groups for change in depression symptom score from baseline. Other available studies are limited by small sample sizes, potential selection and confounding biases, and lack of a control group in the case series. The evidence is insufficient to determine that the technology results in an improvement in the net health outcome.

For individuals who have chronic heart failure who receive VNS, the evidence includes a systematic review including 4 RCTs and case series. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, change in disease status, and functional outcomes. Meta-analyses of the RCTs evaluating chronic heart failure found significant improvements in New York Heart Association functional class, quality of life, 6-minute walk-test, and N-terminal-pro brain natriuretic peptide levels in patients treated with VNS compared to control. An analysis of the ANTHEM-HF uncontrolled trial evaluated longer-term outcomes of VNS use in chronic heart failure. They found that left ventricular (LV) ejection fraction improved by 18.7%, 19.3%, and 34.4% at 12, 24, and 36 months, respectively, with high-intensity VNS. Individuals with low-intensity VNS only had significant improvement in LV ejection fraction at 24 months (12.3%). The ANTHEM-HFpEF trial found improvements in New York Heart Association functional class, quality of life, and 6-minute walk test distances in patients with preserved ejection fraction and implanted VNS. Although this data is promising, a lack of a no-VNS comparator group precludes drawing conclusions based on findings from the uncontrolled studies. The evidence is insufficient to determine that the technology results in an improvement in the net health outcome.

For individuals who have upper-limb impairment due to stroke who receive VNS, the evidence includes 3 pilot RCTs and a systematic review of these RCTs. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, change in disease status, and functional outcomes. Two RCTs compared VNS plus rehabilitation to rehabilitation alone; 1 failed to show significant improvements for the VNS group on response and function outcomes, but the other, which had a larger patient population, found a significant difference in response and function outcomes. The other RCT compared VNS to sham and found that although VNS significantly improved response rate, there were 3 serious adverse events related to surgery. A systematic review pooling these data found that implanted VNS improved upper limb motor function based on Fugl-Meyer Assessment-Upper Extremity score when compared to control. Longer-term follow-up studies are needed to evaluate long-term efficacy and safety. The evidence is insufficient to determine that the technology results in an improvement in the net health outcome. For individuals who have other neurologic conditions (eg, essential tremor, headache, fibromyalgia, tinnitus, autism) who receive VNS, the evidence includes case series. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, change in disease status, and functional outcomes. Case series are insufficient to draw

conclusions regarding efficacy. The evidence is insufficient to determine that the technology results in an improvement in the net health outcome.

Transcutaneous Vagus Nerve Stimulation
For individuals with cluster headaches who receive transcutaneous VNS (tVNS; also referred to as noninvasive VNS [nVNS]) to prevent cluster headaches, the evidence includes 1 RCT. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, change in disease status, quality of life and functional outcomes. One RCT for prevention of cluster headache showed a reduction in headache frequency but did not include a sham treatment group. The evidence is insufficient to determine that the technology results in an improvement in the net health outcome.

For individuals with cluster headache who receive nVNS to treat acute cluster headache, the evidence includes RCTs. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, change in disease status, quality of life and functional outcomes. The ACT1 and ACT2 RCTs compared nVNS to sham for treatment of acute cluster headache in patients including both chronic and episodic cluster headache. In ACT1, there was no statistically significant difference in the overall population in the proportion of patients with pain score of 0 or 1 at 15 minutes into the first attack and no difference in the proportion of patients who were pain-free at 15 minutes in 50% or more of the attacks. In the episodic cluster headache subgroup (n=85) both outcomes were statistically significant favoring nVNS although the interaction p-value was not reported. In ACT2, the proportion of attacks with pain intensity score of 0 or 1 at 30 minutes was higher for nVNS in the overall population (43% vs. 28%, p=.05) while the proportion of attacks that were pain-free at 15 minutes was similar in the 2 treatment groups in the overall population (14% vs. 12%). However, a statistically significantly higher proportion of attacks in the episodic subgroup (n=27) were pain-free at 15 minutes in the nVNS group compared to sham (48% vs. 6%, p<.01). These studies suggest that people with episodic and chronic cluster headaches may respond differently to acute treatment with nVNS. Studies designed to focus on episodic cluster headache are needed. Quality of life and functional outcomes have not been reported. Treatment periods ranged from only 2 weeks to 1 month with extended open-label follow-up of up to 3 months. There are few adverse events of nVNS and they are mild and transient. The evidence is insufficient to determine that the technology results in an improvement in the net health outcome.

For individuals with migraine headache who receive nVNS to treat acute migraine headache, the evidence includes 1 RCT. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, change in disease status, quality of life and functional outcomes. One RCT has evaluated nVNS for acute treatment of migraine with nVNS

in 248 patients with episodic migraine with/without aura. There was not a statistically significant difference in the primary outcome of the proportion of participants who were pain-free without using rescue medication at 120 minutes (30% vs. 20%; p=.07). However, the nVNS group had a higher proportion of patients with decrease in pain from moderate or severe to mild or no pain at 120 minutes (41% vs. 28%; p=.03) and a higher proportion of patients who were pain-free at 120 minutes for 50% or more of their attacks (32% vs. 18%; p=.02). There are few adverse events of nVNS and they are mild and transient. Quality of life and functional outcomes were not reported and the double-blind treatment period was 4 weeks with an additional 4 weeks of open-label treatment. The evidence is insufficient to determine that the technology results in an improvement in the net health outcome.

For individuals with chronic migraine headache who receive nVNS to prevent migraine headache, the evidence includes 3 RCTs. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, change in disease status, quality of life and functional outcomes. The EVENT RCT was a feasibility study of prevention of migraine that was not powered to detect differences in efficacy outcomes. It does not demonstrate the efficacy of nVNS for prevention of migraine. The PREMIUM RCT was a phase 3, multicenter, sham-controlled RCT including 341 randomized participants with a 12-week double-blind treatment period. The results of PREMIUM demonstrated that nVNS was not statistically significantly superior to sham with respect to the outcomes of reduction of at least 50% in migraine days from baseline to the last 4 weeks, reduction in number of migraine days from baseline to the last 4 weeks, or acute medication days. The PREMIUM II trial was a multicenter, sham-controlled RCT including 231 randomized participants with a 12-week double-blind treatment period. The trial was terminated early due to the COVID-19 pandemic and results were based on a modified intention-to-treat population that included 113 total participants. Results demonstrated that treatment with nVNS was not statistically significantly superior to sham with respect to the primary outcome of reduction in the number of migraine days per month during weeks 9 through 12, nor other outcomes such as mean change in the number of headache days or acute medication days. However, the percentage of patients with at least a 50% reduction in the number of migraine days was significantly greater in the nVNS group than in the sham group. The evidence is insufficient to determine that the technology results in an improvement in the net health outcome.

For individuals who have other neurologic, psychiatric, or metabolic disorders (eg, epilepsy, depression, schizophrenia, noncluster headache, impaired glucose tolerance, fibromyalgia, stroke) who receive tVNS, the evidence includes RCTs, systematic reviews of these RCTs, and case series for some of the conditions. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, change in disease status, and

functional outcomes. The RCTs are all small and have various methodologic problems. None showed definitive efficacy of tVNS in improving patient outcomes. The evidence is insufficient to determine that the technology results in an improvement in the net health outcome.

Supplemental Information

Practice Guidelines and Position Statements

Guidelines or position statements will be considered for inclusion in 'Supplemental Information' if they were issued by, or jointly by, a US professional society, an international society with US representation, or National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Priority will be given to guidelines that are informed by a systematic review, include strength of evidence ratings, and include a description of management of conflict of interest.

American Academy of Neurology

In 1999, the American Academy of Neurology released a consensus statement on the use of vagus nerve stimulation (VNS) in adults, which stated: "VNS is indicated for adults and adolescents over 12 years of age with medically intractable partial seizures who are not candidates for potentially curative surgical resections, such as lesionectomies or mesial temporal lobectomies." The guidelines were updated in 2013 and reaffirmed in 2022, stating: "VNS may be considered for seizures in children, for LGS [Lennox-Gastaut syndrome]-associated seizures, and for improving mood in adults with epilepsy (Level C). VNS may be considered to have improved efficacy over time (Level C)."

American Psychiatric Association

Updated in 2010, the American Psychiatric Association guidelines for the treatment of major depressive disorder in adults included the following statement on the use of VNS: "Vagus nerve stimulation (VNS) may be an additional option for individuals who have not responded to at least four adequate trials of antidepressant treatment, including ECT [electroconvulsive therapy]," with a level of evidence III (may be recommended on the basis of individual circumstances).

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

In 2016, the NICE issued guidance on use of transcutaneous stimulation of the cervical branch of the vagus nerve for cluster headache and migraine (IPG552). The guidance states: "Current evidence on the safety of transcutaneous stimulation of the cervical branch of the vagus nerve for cluster

headache and migraine raises no major concerns. The evidence on efficacy is limited in quantity and quality." The guidance also comments that further research is needed to clarify whether the procedure is used for treatment or prevention, for cluster headache or migraine, appropriate patient selection, and treatment regimen and suggests that outcome measures should include changes in the number and severity of cluster headache or migraine episodes, medication use, quality of life in the short and long term, side effects, acceptability, and device durability.

In 2018, the NICE also published a Medtech innovation briefing on noninvasive VNS for cluster headache (MIB162). The briefing states that the 'intended place in therapy would be as well as standard care, most likely where standard treatments for cluster headache are ineffective, not tolerated or contraindicated' and that key uncertainties around the evidence are that 'people with episodic and chronic cluster headaches respond differently to treatment with gammaCore. The optimal use of gammaCore in the different populations is unclear. The NICE published a Medical technologies guidance [MTG46] on gammaCore for cluster headache in December 2019. The recommendations state that evidence supports using gammaCore to treat cluster headache and that gammaCore is not effective in everyone with cluster headache.

In 2020, the NICE published an Interventional Procedure Overview on implanted vagus nerve stimulation for treatment-resistant depression (IPG679). The guidance states: "Evidence on the safety of implanted vagus nerve stimulation for treatment-resistant depression raises no major safety concerns, but there are frequent, well-recognized side effects. Evidence on its efficacy is limited in quality. Therefore, this procedure should only be used with special arrangements for clinical governance, consent, and audit or research." The guidance further states that "NICE encourages further research into implanted vagus nerve stimulation for treatment-resistant depression, in the form of randomized controlled trials with a placebo or sham stimulation arm. Studies should report details of patient selection. Outcomes should include validated depression rating scales, patient-reported quality of life, time to onset of effect and duration of effect, and any changes in concurrent treatment."

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Recommendations
Not applicable.

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Medicare National Coverage
Medicare has a national coverage determination for VNS. Medicare coverage policy notes that "Clinical evidence has shown that vagus nerve stimulation is safe and effective treatment for individuals with medically refractory partial onset seizures, for whom surgery is not recommended or for whom surgery has failed. Vagus nerve stimulation is not covered for individuals with other types of seizure disorders that are medically refractory and for whom surgery is not recommended or for whom surgery has failed."

In response to a request from LivaNova, on May 30, 2018 CMS initiated its second reconsideration of its national coverage decision on VNS for Treatment Resistant Depression (TRD). Based on an internal literature review (search dates unspecified), CMS concluded that although the published evidence suggests that VNS is a promising treatment for patients with TRD, the reviewed studies have important flaws that leave uncertainty about its true benefits and harms. Thus, effective February 15, 2019, the CMS expanded Medicare coverage to "cover U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved vagus nerve stimulation (VNS) devices for treatment resistant depression (TRD) through Coverage with Evidence Development when offered in a CMS approved, double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trial with a follow-up duration of at least one year with the possibility of extending the study to a prospective longitudinal study when the CMS approved, double-blind, randomized placebo-controlled trial has completed enrollment, and there are positive interim findings." CMS approval of a Coverage with Evidence Development study requires answering 9 research questions specifying measurement of response, remission, harms and other health outcome variables, use of specific eligibility criteria for TRD diagnosis as described in an Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Technology Assessment conducted by Gaynes et al (2018), as well as 13 additional operational criteria. CMS has approved 1 ongoing study for Coverage with Evidence Development - A Prospective, Multi-center, Randomized Controlled Blinded Trial Demonstrating the Safety and Effectiveness of VNS Therapy®‡ System as Adjunctive Therapy Versus a No Stimulation Control in Subjects With Treatment-Resistant Depression (RECOVER) (NCT03887715). Conway et al (2020) have published a detailed description of the RECOVER study rationale and design.

Ongoing and Unpublished Clinical Trials
Some currently unpublished trials that might influence this review are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of Key Trials

NCT No.	Trial Name	Planned Enrollment	Completion Date
Ongoing			
NCT03320304[a]	A Global Prospective, Multi-center, Observational Post-Market Study to Assess short, Mid and Long-term Effectiveness and Efficiency of VNS Therapy®‡ as Adjunctive Therapy in real-world patients With difficult to Treat Depression	500	Dec 2028
NCT03887715[a]	A Prospective, Multi-center, Randomized Controlled Blinded Trial Demonstrating the Safety and Effectiveness of VNS Therapy®‡ System as Adjunctive Therapy Versus a No Stimulation Control in Subjects With Treatment-Resistant Depression (RECOVER)	6800	Dec 2030
NCT04935567	Prediction of Vagal Nerve Stimulation Efficacy In Drug-Resistant Epilepsy: Prospective Study for Pre-implantation Prediction	120	Dec 2026
NCT04777500	Applying Transcutaneous Auricular Vagus Nerve Stimulation to Treat Fibromyalgia	60	Mar 2023
NCT04534556	Wireless Nerve Stimulation Device To Enhance Recovery After Stroke	30	Jan 2024
NCT04448327	Sex-Dependent Impact of Transcutaneous Vagal Nerve Stimulation on the Stress Response Circuitry and Autonomic Dysregulation in Major Depression	80	Nov 2024
NCT04539964[a]	Vagus Nerve Stimulation Using the SetPoint System for Moderate to Severe Rheumatoid Arthritis: The RESET-RA Study	250	May 2027
Unpublished			

NCT02562703	Transcutaneous Vagus Nerve Stimulation for Treating Major Depressive Disorder: a Phase II, Randomized, Double-blind Clinical Trial	40	Jul 2016 (unknown)
NCT02089243	Prospective Randomized Controlled Study of Vagus Nerve Stimulation Therapy in the Patients With Medically Refractory Medial Temporal Lobe Epilepsy; Controlled Randomized Vagus Nerve Stimulation Versus Resection (CoRaVNStiR)	40	Jul 2017 (unknown)
NCT01281293[a]	A Post Market, Long Term, Observational, Multi-site Outcome Study to Follow the Clinical Course and Seizure Reduction of Patients With Refractory Seizures Who Are Being Treated With Adjunctive VNS Therapy	124	Aug 2018
NCT03380156	Effect of Transcutaneous Vagal Stimulation (TVS) on Endothelial Function and Arterial Stiffness in Patients With Heart Failure With Reduced Ejection Fraction	50	May 2020
NCT04926415	Effects of Transcutaneous Auricular Vagus Nerve Stimulation on Obesity and Insulin Resistance	30	Apr 2022

NCT: national clinical trial.
[a] Denotes industry-sponsored or cosponsored trial.

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Policy History

Original Effective Date: 06/05/2002
Current Effective Date: 06/10/2024

03/21/2002	Medical Policy Committee review
06/05/2002	Managed Care Advisory Council approval
05/07/2004	Medical Director review
05/18/2004	Medical Policy Committee review. Format revision. No substance change to policy.
06/28/2004	Managed Care Advisory Council approval
06/07/2005	Medical Director review
06/21/2005	Medical Policy Committee review. Clinical criteria revised to add investigational statement for VNS treatment for essential tremor
07/15/2005	Managed Care Advisory Council Approval
06/07/2006	Medical Director review
06/21/2006	Medical Policy Committee approval. Format revision, including addition of FDA and or other governmental regulatory approval and rationale/source. Coverage eligibility unchanged
08/04/2006	Medical Director Review
08/09/2006	Medical Policy Committee approval
11/07/2007	Medical Director Review
11/15/2007	Medical Policy Committee approval. Added headaches to the investigational policy statement.
11/05/2008	Medical Director Review

11/18/2008	Medical Policy Committee approval. No change to coverage eligibility.
11/12/2009	Medical Policy Committee approval
11/18/2009	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. Deleted "partial-onset" verbiage from "medically refractory seizures" in the coverage section. Added the treatment of obesity as an investigational indication.
11/04/2011	Medical Policy Committee review
11/16/2010	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. Coverage eligibility unchanged.
12/31/2010	Coding updated.
11/03/2011	Medical Policy Committee review
11/16/2011	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. Coverage eligibility unchanged.
11/01/2012	Medical Policy Committee review
11/28/2012	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. Added heart failure and fibromyalgia to the list of investigational indications.
01/23/2013	Coding updated
11/07/2013	Medical Policy Committee review
11/20/2013	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. No change to coverage.
11/06/2014	Medical Policy Committee review
11/21/2014	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. Policy statement updated to include the addition of tinnitus and traumatic brain injury to the list of investigational conditions. "Based on review of available data, the Company considers non implantable vagus nerve stimulation (VNS) devices for all indications to be investigational" was added to the investigational section.
08/03/2015	Coding update: ICD10 Diagnosis code section added; ICD9 Procedure code section removed.
10/29/2015	Medical Policy Committee review
11/16/2015	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. No change to coverage.
11/03/2016	Medical Policy Committee review
11/16/2016	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. No change to coverage.
01/01/2017	Coding update: Removing ICD-9 Diagnosis Codes
12/07/2017	Medical Policy Committee review
12/20/2017	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. No change to coverage.
12/06/2018	Medical Policy Committee review
12/19/2018	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. No change to coverage. FDA updated.

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01/01/2019	Coding update
12/05/2019	Medical Policy Committee review
12/11/2019	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. Coverage eligibility unchanged.
05/07/2020	Medical Policy Committee review
05/13/2020	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. Coverage eligibility unchanged.
05/06/2021	Medical Policy Committee review
05/12/2021	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. Coverage eligibility unchanged.
09/30/2021	Coding update
05/05/2022	Medical Policy Committee review
05/11/2022	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. Coverage eligibility unchanged.
12/07/2022	Coding update
05/04/2023	Medical Policy Committee review
05/10/2023	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. Coverage eligibility unchanged.
12/12/2023	Coding update
05/02/2024	Medical Policy Committee review
05/08/2024	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. Coverage eligibility unchanged.
02/28/2025	Coding update

Next Scheduled Review Date: 05/2025

Coding

The five character codes included in the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana Medical Policy Coverage Guidelines are obtained from Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®)‡, copyright 2023 by the American Medical Association (AMA). CPT is developed by the AMA as a listing of descriptive terms and five character identifying codes and modifiers for reporting medical services and procedures performed by physician.

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medicine or dispense medical services. The AMA assumes no liability for data contained or not contained herein. Any use of CPT outside of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana Medical Policy Coverage Guidelines should refer to the most current Current Procedural Terminology which contains the complete and most current listing of CPT codes and descriptive terms. Applicable FARS/DFARS apply.

CPT is a registered trademark of the American Medical Association.

Codes used to identify services associated with this policy may include (but may not be limited to) the following:

Code Type	Code
CPT	61885, 61886, 61888, 64553, 64568, 64569, 64570, 95976, 95977
HCPCS	C1767, C1778, C1787, C1816, C1820, C1822, C1883, E0735, L8679, L8680, L8681, L8682, L8683, L8685, L8686, L8687, L8688, L8689, L8695 Add code effective 04/01/2025: C1827 Delete code effective 01/01/2024: K1020
ICD-10 Diagnosis	All related diagnoses

*Investigational – A medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product is Investigational if the effectiveness has not been clearly tested and it has not been incorporated into standard medical practice. Any determination we make that a medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product is Investigational will be based on a consideration of the following:

A. Whether the medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product can be lawfully marketed without approval of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and whether such approval has been granted at the time the medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product is sought to be furnished; or
B. Whether the medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product requires further studies or clinical trials to determine its maximum tolerated dose, toxicity, safety, effectiveness, or effectiveness as compared with the standard means of treatment or diagnosis, must improve health outcomes, according to the consensus of opinion among experts as shown by reliable evidence, including:
    1. Consultation with technology evaluation center(s);

2. Credible scientific evidence published in peer-reviewed medical literature generally recognized by the relevant medical community; or
3. Reference to federal regulations.

**Medically Necessary (or "Medical Necessity") - Health care services, treatment, procedures, equipment, drugs, devices, items or supplies that a Provider, exercising prudent clinical judgment, would provide to a patient for the purpose of preventing, evaluating, diagnosing or treating an illness, injury, disease or its symptoms, and that are:

A. In accordance with nationally accepted standards of medical practice;
B. Clinically appropriate, in terms of type, frequency, extent, level of care, site and duration, and considered effective for the patient's illness, injury or disease; and
C. Not primarily for the personal comfort or convenience of the patient, physician or other health care provider, and not more costly than an alternative service or sequence of services at least as likely to produce equivalent therapeutic or diagnostic results as to the diagnosis or treatment of that patient's illness, injury or disease.

For these purposes, "nationally accepted standards of medical practice" means standards that are based on credible scientific evidence published in peer-reviewed medical literature generally recognized by the relevant medical community, Physician Specialty Society recommendations and the views of Physicians practicing in relevant clinical areas and any other relevant factors.

‡ Indicated trademarks are the registered trademarks of their respective owners.

NOTICE: If the Patient's health insurance contract contains language that differs from the BCBSLA Medical Policy definition noted above, the definition in the health insurance contract will be relied upon for specific coverage determinations.

NOTICE: Medical Policies are scientific based opinions, provided solely for coverage and informational purposes. Medical Policies should not be construed to suggest that the Company recommends, advocates, requires, encourages, or discourages any particular treatment, procedure, or service, or any particular course of treatment, procedure, or service.

NOTICE: Federal and State law, as well as contract language, including definitions and specific contract provisions/exclusions, take precedence over Medical Policy and must be considered first in determining eligibility for coverage.