

Medical Coverage Policy



**Blue Cross
Blue Shield**
of Rhode Island

Off-Label Use of Prescription Drugs for Cancer

Device/Equipment Drug Medical Surgery Test Other

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| Effective Date: | 1/17/2012 | Policy Last Updated: | 1/17/2012 |
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Prospective review is recommended/required. Please check the member agreement for preauthorization guidelines.

Prospective review is not required.

NOTE: The policy does not apply to BlueCHiP for Medicare (except where benefits were previously extended), as Medicare products are exempt from state mandates.

Description:

Rhode Island General Laws 27-55-2 mandates coverage of off-label uses of prescription drugs. This law is concerned with coverage of any drug used for the treatment of cancer.

"Section 27-55-2 Prescription drug coverage.

(a) No health insurer issuing a policy which provides coverage for prescription drugs shall exclude coverage of any drug used for the treatment of cancer on the grounds that the drug has not been approved by the FDA for that indication, provided that the drug is recognized for treatment of that indication in one of the standard reference compendia, or in the medical literature. It is the responsibility of the prescribing physician to submit to the insurer documentation supporting the proposed off-label use or uses, if requested by the issuer.

(b) Any coverage of a drug which serves as the primary treatment required by this chapter shall also include medically necessary services associated with the administration of the drug.

(c) No coverage is required under this chapter: (1) for any drug which has not been fully licensed or approved by the FDA, (2) for the use of any drug when the FDA has determined that use to be contraindicated, or (3) for any experimental drug not approved for any indication by the FDA. The provisions of this section apply to drugs used in the treatment for cancer only and nothing in this section is construed to create, impair, alter, limit, modify, enlarge, abrogate or prohibit reimbursement for medications used in the treatment of any other disease or condition.

(d) Nothing in this section is construed to prevent the application of contractual deductibles or co-payment provisions or managed care review."

"Section 27-55-3 Advisory panel on off-label uses of prescription drugs. The director of the department of health shall appoint an advisory panel of seven (7) medical experts. The purpose of the advisory panel is to make recommendations to the director regarding whether a particular off-label use is medically appropriate, whenever a particular dispute about payment for this off-label use is referred to the director of the department of

health. Parties seeking to refer a dispute to the director shall do so in writing within thirty (30) days of the denial of coverage of the drug. The members of the panel shall include seven (7) licensed Rhode Island physicians, including: (1) a physician appointed by a hospital and medical services corporation; (2) a physician appointed by the Rhode Island Medical Society; (3) three (3) medical oncologists appointed by the society of Rhode Island Clinical Oncologists; (4) a physician appointed by the Rhode Island Association of Health Maintenance Organizations from a member plan; and (5) a Rhode Island physician appointed by the Health Insurance Association of America. The members of the advisory panel shall serve at the pleasure of the director of the department of health and shall receive no compensation for their service on this advisory panel."

"Section 27-55-1 Definitions. – For the purpose of this chapter, the following words and terms have the following meanings:

(1) "FDA" means the federal food and drug administration;

(2) "Health insurer" means all persons, firms, corporations or other organizations offering and assuring health services on a prepaid or primarily expense incurred basis including, but not limited to, policies of accident or sickness insurance, as defined in chapter 18 of this title, nonprofit hospital or medical service plans, whether organized under chapter 19 or 20 of this title or under any public law or by special act of the general assembly, health maintenance organizations, and any other entity, which insures or reimburses for diagnostic, therapeutic or preventive services to a determined population on the basis of a periodic premium;

(3) "Medical literature" means published scientific studies published in at least two (2) articles from major peer reviewed medical journals that present data supporting the proposed off-label use or uses as generally safe and effective unless there is clear and convincing contradictory evidence presented in a major peer reviewed medical journal;

(4) "Standard reference compendia" means: (i) the United States Pharmacopoeia drug information, (ii) the American Medical Association drug evaluations, or (iii) the American Hospital Formulary Service drug information;

(5) "Drug" means the primary anti-cancer or antineoplastic agent or agents."

Medical Criteria:

Not applicable

Policy:

Rhode Island General Law 27-55-2 requires coverage of any drugs used for the treatment of cancer.

Coverage:

Please refer to the appropriate Evidence of Coverage or Subscriber Agreement for applicable pharmacy/drug benefits/coverage.

Published:

Policy Update, August 2006

Provider Update, April 2009

Provider Update, April 2010

Provider Update, May 2011

Provider Update, March 2012

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