Medical Policy
Suprachoroidal Delivery of Pharmacologic Agents

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Policy Number: 609
BCBSA Reference Number: 9.03.19A (For Plan internal use only)
NCD/LCD: NA

Related Policies
- Photodynamic Therapy #599
- Transpupillary Thermotherapy for Treatment of Choroidal Neovascularization, #600
- Epiretinal Radiation for Age-Related Macular Degeneration, #610
- Intravitreal Angiogenesis Inhibitors for Choroidal Vascular Conditions, #343

Policy
Commercial Members: Managed Care (HMO and POS), PPO, and Indemnity Medicare HMO BlueSM and Medicare PPO BlueSM Members

Suprachoroidal delivery of a pharmacologic agent is INVESTIGATIONAL.

Prior Authorization Information

Inpatient
- For services described in this policy, precertification/preauthorization IS REQUIRED for all products if the procedure is performed inpatient.

Outpatient
- For services described in this policy, see below for products where prior authorization might be required if the procedure is performed outpatient.

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<tr>
<th>Commercial Managed Care (HMO and POS)</th>
<th>Outpatient</th>
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<td>This is not a covered service.</td>
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<th>Commercial PPO and Indemnity</th>
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CPT Codes / HCPCS Codes / ICD Codes
Inclusion or exclusion of a code does not constitute or imply member coverage or provider reimbursement. Please refer to the member’s contract benefits in effect at the time of service to determine coverage or non-coverage as it applies to an individual member.

Providers should report all services using the most up-to-date industry-standard procedure, revenue, and diagnosis codes, including modifiers where applicable.

CPT Codes
No specific CPT codes.

Description
Age-related macular degeneration and diabetic neuropathy are the most prevalent causes of visual impairment and are classified as posterior segment ocular diseases due to the location of the affected eye structures in the back two thirds of the eye. These posterior structures include the vitreous humor, retina, choroid, macula, and optic nerve. Delivery of pharmacologic agents to the suprachoroidal space is being investigated for treatment of posterior eye segment diseases, as current modes of drug delivery to the eye (topical and systemic) often lack bioavailability and fail to deliver therapeutic levels of drugs to the retina and posterior segment structures. Examples of drugs used via suprachoroidal injection to treat age related macular degeneration include ranibizumab and pegaptanib. For treatment of diabetic neuropathy, an example is triamcinolone acetonide.

A microcannula system (the delivery method of suprachoroidal injection) originates from this same idea and combines a drug delivery channel with a fiber-optic light source to allow transmission of light to the tip of the microcannula for illumination and guidance. One potential advantage of suprachoroidal injection would be the ability to minimize systemic side effects while delivering higher local tissue levels of drugs, assuming high local levels lead to improved outcomes. Weighed against this potential benefit is the risk of localized tissue damage from the microcannula.

An example of a device for suprachoroidal delivery of a pharmacologic agent includes the iTrack™ from iScience Interventional. All devices for suprachoroidal delivery of a pharmacologic agent are considered investigational regardless of the commercial name, the manufacturer or FDA approval status.

Summary
Evidence remains insufficient to evaluate whether suprachoroidal delivery of pharmacologic agents improves the net health outcome. Thus, this procedure is considered investigational.

Policy History

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>2/2020</td>
<td>Policy updated with literature review through February 1, 2020, references added. Policy statements unchanged.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/2015</td>
<td>Annual policy review. New references added.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/2014</td>
<td>Updated to remove deleted CPT code 0186T.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/19/2011</td>
<td>Medical Policy 609 -effective 1/19/2011 describing ongoing non-coverage.</td>
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Information Pertaining to All Blue Cross Blue Shield Medical Policies
Click on any of the following terms to access the relevant information:
Medical Policy Terms of Use
Managed Care Guidelines
Indemnity/PPO Guidelines
References