



Drug Coverage Policy

Effective Date11/15/2025

Coverage Policy Number.....IP0762

Policy Title.....Epoprostenol Products

Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension – Epoprostenol Products

- Flolan® (epoprostenol intravenous infusion – GlaxoSmithKline, generic)
- Veletri® (epoprostenol intravenous infusion – Actelion)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

The following Coverage Policy applies to health benefit plans administered by Cigna Companies. Certain Cigna Companies and/or lines of business only provide utilization review services to clients and do not make coverage determinations. References to standard benefit plan language and coverage determinations do not apply to those clients. Coverage Policies are intended to provide guidance in interpreting certain standard benefit plans administered by Cigna Companies. Please note, the terms of a customer's particular benefit plan document [Group Service Agreement, Evidence of Coverage, Certificate of Coverage, Summary Plan Description (SPD) or similar plan document] may differ significantly from the standard benefit plans upon which these Coverage Policies are based. For example, a customer's benefit plan document may contain a specific exclusion related to a topic addressed in a Coverage Policy. In the event of a conflict, a customer's benefit plan document always supersedes the information in the Coverage Policies. In the absence of a controlling federal or state coverage mandate, benefits are ultimately determined by the terms of the applicable benefit plan document. Coverage determinations in each specific instance require consideration of 1) the terms of the applicable benefit plan document in effect on the date of service; 2) any applicable laws/regulations; 3) any relevant collateral source materials including Coverage Policies and; 4) the specific facts of the particular situation. Each coverage request should be reviewed on its own merits. Medical directors are expected to exercise clinical judgment where appropriate and have discretion in making individual coverage determinations. Where coverage for care or services does not depend on specific circumstances, reimbursement will only be provided if a requested service(s) is submitted in accordance with the relevant criteria outlined in the applicable Coverage Policy, including covered diagnosis and/or procedure code(s). Reimbursement is not allowed for services when billed for conditions or diagnoses that are not covered under this Coverage Policy (see "Coding Information" below). When billing, providers must use the most appropriate codes as of the effective date of the submission. Claims submitted for services that are not accompanied by covered code(s) under the applicable Coverage Policy will be denied as not covered. Coverage Policies relate exclusively to the administration of health benefit plans. Coverage Policies are not recommendations for treatment and should never be used as treatment guidelines. In certain markets, delegated vendor guidelines may be used to support medical necessity and other coverage determinations.

Overview

Epoprostenol intravenous infusion, a prostacyclin vasodilator, is indicated for the treatment of pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH) [World Health Organization {WHO} Group 1] to improve exercise capacity.¹⁻³

Epoprostenol intravenous infusion has been used with varying results in patients with chronic thromboembolic pulmonary hypertension (CTEPH).⁴⁻⁶ It is sometimes used as a bridge prior to surgery. Limited options are available for patients with CTEPH.

Disease Overview

PAH is a serious but rare condition impacting fewer than 20,000 patients in the US.^{7,8} The estimated incidence of PAH is 2 cases per 1 million per year with a prevalence of 10.6 cases per 1 million adults.⁷ It is classified within Group 1 pulmonary hypertension among the five different groups that are recognized.^{7,8} In this progressive disorder, the small arteries in the lungs become narrowed, restricted, or blocked causing the heart to work harder to pump blood, leading to activity impairment. In time, right-sided heart failure and/or death may occur. Common PAH symptoms include shortness of breath, fatigue, chest pain, dizziness, and fainting, along with impairment in activity tolerance. It is more prevalent in women. Patients of all ages may develop the disease; however, the mean age of diagnosis typically happens between 36 to 50 years. Children may also have PAH. The condition may occur due to various underlying medical conditions or as a disease (e.g., connective tissue disease, HIV) that uniquely impacts the pulmonary circulation; both genetic and environmental factors may be involved. PAH is defined as a mean pulmonary artery pressure (mPAP) > 20 mmHg (at rest) with a pulmonary arterial wedge pressure (PAWP) ≤ 15 mmHg and a pulmonary vascular resistance > 2 Wood units measured by cardiac catheterization.¹³ The prognosis in PAH has been described as poor, with the median survival being approximately 3 years. However, primarily due to advances in pharmacological therapies, the long-term prognosis has improved. Lung transplantation may be recommended if pharmacological or medical therapies fail, based upon patient status. The WHO categorizes PAH into stages, which is also referred to as the functional class (Class I to IV) and is an adaptation of the New York Heart Association system to evaluate activity tolerance.

CTEPH is a persistent obstruction of pulmonary arteries and is often a complication of pulmonary embolism.^{9,10} It is classified within Group 4 pulmonary hypertension. Symptoms include progressive dyspnea on exertion, as well as fatigue, syncope, hemoptysis, and signs of right heart failure. Pulmonary endarterectomy is the treatment of choice for most patients with CTEPH. However, around 40% of patients are deemed inoperable for various reasons. Medication therapy may also be recommended. Anticoagulant therapy is also given.

Guidelines

Several guidelines address intravenous epoprostenol products in the management of pulmonary hypertension.^{8,11}

- **Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension:** The CHEST guidelines and Expert Panel Report regarding therapy for PAH in adults (2019) cites the many medications that have utility for this condition.⁸ In the absence of contraindications, patients with PAH should undergo acute vasoreactivity testing utilizing a short-acting agent (e.g., calcium channel blockers). For patients in Functional Class II, oral therapies are recommended such as endothelin receptor antagonists (ambrisentan, bosentan, Opsumit® [macitentan tablets]), phosphodiesterase type 5 inhibitors (tadalafil, sildenafil), and Adempas® (riociguat tablets). It is suggested that parenteral or inhaled prostanoids not be chosen as initial therapy for treatment naïve-patients with PAH with WHO Functional Class II symptoms or as second-line agents for patients with PAH with WHO Functional Class II who have not met their treatment goals. Parenteral prostanoids are recommended for patients with PAH in

Functional Class III and IV.⁸ The European Society of Cardiology (ESC) and the European Respiratory Society (ERS) guidelines regarding the treatment of pulmonary hypertension (2022) also recognize intravenous epoprostenol as having a prominent role in the management of this condition, usually in later therapy stages and after other therapies.¹¹

- **Chronic Thromboembolic Pulmonary Hypertension:** Guidelines from the ESC/ERS regarding the treatment of pulmonary hypertension (2022) recommended to consider parenteral prostacyclin analogs for patients with inoperable CTEPH.¹¹

Safety

Epoprostenol should not be abruptly discontinued or have the dose rapidly decreased as rebound pulmonary hypertension may occur.¹⁻³

Coverage Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

Prior Authorization is required for benefit coverage of epoprostenol injection. Approval is recommended for those who meet the **Criteria** and **Dosing** for the listed indications. Extended approvals are allowed if the patient continues to meet the Criteria and Dosing. Requests for doses outside of the established dosing documented in this policy will be considered on a case-by-case basis by a clinician (i.e., Medical Director or Pharmacist). All approvals are provided for 1 year in duration unless otherwise noted below. Specifically, approvals will remain up to 14 days for patients currently receiving the agent for the indication of PAH (WHO Group 1) with inadequate information or if the criteria are not met. These cases are reviewed by a nurse or pharmacist. Because of the specialized skills required for evaluation and diagnosis of patients treated with epoprostenol injection as well as the monitoring required for adverse events and long-term efficacy, approval requires epoprostenol injection to be prescribed by or in consultation with a physician who specializes in the condition being treated.

Documentation: In the *Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension – Epoprostenol Utilization Management Medical Policy*, documentation is required for initiation of therapy where noted in the criteria as **[documentation required]**. Documentation may include, but is not limited to, chart notes and catheterization laboratory reports. For a patient case in which the documentation requirement of the right heart catheterization upon prior authorization coverage review for a different medication indicated for WHO Group 1 PAH has been previously provided, the documentation requirement in this *Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension – Epoprostenol Utilization Management Medical Policy* is considered to be met.

Epoprostenol injection is considered medically necessary when ONE of the following are met (1 or 2):

FDA-Approved Indication

Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension (PAH) [World Health Organization {WHO} Group 1].

1. Approve for the duration noted if the patient meets ONE of the following (A or B):

A) Initial Therapy. Approve for 1 year if the patient meets ALL of the following (i, ii, iii, iv, and v):

- i. Patient has a diagnosis of World Health Organization (WHO) Group 1 pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH); AND
- ii. Patient meets BOTH of the following (a and b):

- a) Patient has had a right heart catheterization **[documentation required]** (see documentation section above); AND
 - b) Results of the right heart catheterization confirm the diagnosis of WHO Group 1 PAH; AND
- iii. Patient meets ONE of the following (a or b):
 - a) Patient is in Functional Class III or IV; OR
 - b) Patient is in Functional Class II and meets ONE of the following [(1) or (2)]:
 - (1) Patient has tried or is currently receiving one oral agent for PAH; OR

Note: Examples of oral agents for PAH include bosentan, ambrisentan, Opsumit (macitentan tablets), Opsumvi (macitentan/tadalafil tablets), sildenafil, tadalafil, Adempas (riociguat tablets), Orenitram (treprostinil extended-release tablets), Alyq (tadalafil tablets), Tadiq (tadalafil oral suspension), and Uptravi (selexipag tablets).
 - (2) Patient has tried one inhaled or parenteral prostacyclin product for PAH; AND

Note: Examples of inhaled and parenteral prostacyclin products for PAH include Tyvaso (treprostinil inhalation solution), Tyvaso DPI (treprostinil oral inhalation powder), Ventavis (iloprost inhalation solution), Yutrepia (treprostinil oral inhalation powder), treprostinil injection, and epoprostenol injection.
- iv. Patient with idiopathic PAH must meet ONE of the following (a, b, c, d, or e):
 - a) Patient meets BOTH of the following [(1) and (2)]:
 - (1) According to the prescriber, the patient has had an acute response to vasodilator testing that occurred during the right heart catheterization; AND

Note: An example of a response can be defined as a decrease in mean pulmonary artery pressure of at least 10 mm Hg to an absolute mean pulmonary artery pressure of less than 40 mm Hg without a decrease in cardiac output.
 - (2) Patient has tried one calcium channel blocker (CCB) therapy; OR

Note: Examples of CCBs include amlodipine and nifedipine extended-release tablets.
 - b) According to the prescriber, the patient did not have an acute response to vasodilator testing; OR
 - c) According to the prescriber, the patient cannot undergo a vasodilator test; OR
 - d) Patient cannot take CCB therapy; OR

Note: Examples of reasons a patient cannot take CCB therapy include right heart failure or decreased cardiac output.
 - e) Patient has tried one CCB; AND

Note: Examples of CCBs include amlodipine and nifedipine extended-release tablets.
- v. Medication is prescribed by or in consultation with a cardiologist or a pulmonologist; OR
- B) Patient Currently Receiving Epoprostenol.** Approve for the duration noted below if the patient meets ONE of the following (i or ii):
 - i. Approve for 1 year if the patient meets ALL of the following (a, b, and c):
 - a) Patient has a diagnosis of World Health Organization (WHO) Group 1 pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH); AND
 - b) Patient meets BOTH of the following [(1) and (2)]:
 - (1) Patient has had a right heart catheterization; AND

Note: This refers to prior to starting therapy with a medication for WHO Group 1 PAH.
 - (2) Results of the right heart catheterization confirm the diagnosis of WHO Group 1 PAH; AND

- c) Medication is prescribed by or in consultation with a cardiologist or a pulmonologist;
OR
- ii. Approve a short-term supply of epoprostenol for up to 14 days if the patient does not meet the criteria in 1Bi above or if there is insufficient information available. All approvals are reviewed by a nurse or pharmacist.
Note: A 14-day supply should be sufficient to address coverage issues. However, multiple short-term approvals are allowed if a coverage determination cannot be made. Abrupt discontinuation of epoprostenol therapy may have severe adverse consequences.

Dosing. Approve up to 100 ng/kg/minute intravenously.

Other Uses with Supportive Evidence

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- 2. Chronic Thromboembolic Pulmonary Hypertension (CTEPH).** Approve for 1 year if the agent is prescribed by or in consultation with a pulmonologist or a cardiologist.

Dosing. Approve up to 45 ng/kg/minute intravenously.

Conditions Not Covered

Epoprostenol injection for any other use is considered not medically necessary, including the following (this list may not be all inclusive; criteria will be updated as new published data are available):

- 1. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) in a Patient Without PAH (WHO Group 1).** COPD is classified as Group 3 Pulmonary Hypertension (pulmonary hypertension associated with lung diseases and/or hypoxia). Pulmonary hypertension may develop late in the course of COPD, but medications used for the treatment of PAH (WHO Group 1) are not recommended therapies.¹²
- 2. Concurrent Use with Parenteral Treprostinil Products, Oral Prostacyclin Products, or Inhaled Prostacyclin Agents Used for Pulmonary Hypertension.**
Note: Examples of medications include Orenitram (treprostinil extended-release tablets), Uptravi (selexipag tablets and intravenous infusion), Tyvaso (treprostinil inhalation solution), Tyvaso DPI (treprostinil oral inhalation powder), Ventavis (iloprost inhalation solution), and treprostinil injection (Remodulin, generic).

Coding Information

- 1) This list of codes may not be all-inclusive.
- 2) Deleted codes and codes which are not effective at the time the service is rendered may not be eligible for reimbursement.

Considered Medically Necessary when criteria in the applicable policy statements listed above are met:

HCP Codes	Description

J1325	Injection, epoprostenol, 0.5 mg
S0155	Sterile dilutant for epoprostenol, 50 ml

References

1. Flolan® intravenous infusion [prescribing information]: Research Triangle Park: NC; GlaxoSmithKline; October 2023.
2. Epoprostenol sodium intravenous infusion [prescribing information]. Cranbury, NJ: Sun; January 2021.
3. Veletri® intravenous infusion [prescribing information]. South San Francisco, CA: Actelion/Janssen; July 2022.
4. Condliffe R, Kiely DG, Gibbs SR, et al. Improved outcomes in medically and surgically treated chronic thromboembolic pulmonary hypertension. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med*. 2008;177:1122-1127.
5. Bresser P, Fedullo PF, Auger WR, et al. Continuous epoprostenol for chronic thromboembolic pulmonary hypertension. *Eur Respir J*. 2004; 23:595-600.
6. Cabrol S, Souza R, Jais X, et al. Intravenous epoprostenol in inoperable chronic thromboembolic pulmonary hypertension. *J Heart Lung Transplant*. 2007;26(4):357-362.
7. Ruopp NF, Cockrill BA. Diagnosis and treatment of pulmonary arterial hypertension. A review. *JAMA*. 2022;327(14):1379-1391.
8. Klinger JR, Elliott CG, Levine DJ, et al. Therapy for pulmonary arterial hypertension in adults. Update of the CHEST guideline and Expert Panel Report. *CHEST*. 2019;155(3):565-586.
9. Kim NH, Delcroix M, Jais X, et al. Chronic thromboembolic pulmonary hypertension. *Eur Respir J*. 2019;53(1):1801915.
10. Papamatheakis DG, Poch DS, Fernandes TM, et al. Chronic thromboembolic pulmonary hypertension: JACC focus seminar. *J Am Coll Cardiol*. 2020;76(180):2155-2169.
11. Humbert M, Kovacs G, Hoeper MM, et al, for the ESC/ERS Scientific Document Group. 2022 ESC/ERS guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of pulmonary hypertension. *Eur Heart J*. 2022 Aug 26. [Online ahead of print].
12. Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease. Global strategy for the diagnosis, management, and prevention of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (2024 report). © 2024 Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease. Available at: <https://goldcopd.org/2024-gold-report/>. Accessed on October 2, 2024.
13. Maron BA. Revised Definition of Pulmonary Hypertension and Approach to Management: A Clinical Primer. *J Am Heart Assoc*. 2023 Apr 18;12(8):e029024. [Epub].

Revision Details

Type of Revision	Summary of Changes	Date
New	New policy.	11/15/2025

The policy effective date is in force until updated or retired.

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