Medical Policy

Zulresso™ (Brexanalone) for the Treatment of Post-Partum Depression

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Policy Number: 147
BCBSA Reference Number: N/A
NCD/LCD: N/A

Related Policies
Outpatient Psychotherapy, #423

Policy¹
Commercial Members: Managed Care (HMO and POS), PPO, and Indemnity Medicare HMO BlueSM and Medicare PPO BlueSM Members

Zulresso™ (brexanalone) for the treatment of post-partum depression in women 18 years and older, may be MEDICALLY NECESSARY when the following criteria are met:

1. The prescriber is a specialist in the area of the patient's diagnosis (e.g. psychiatrist) or the prescriber has consulted with a specialist in the area of the patient's diagnosis, AND
2. The patient meets the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-5 (DSM-5) criteria for major depressive disorder*, moderate to severe, AND
3. Peripartum onset (onset of depressive episode between 3rd trimester through 4 weeks postpartum), AND
4. Must be administered in the inpatient setting, AND
5. The patient does NOT have any FDA labeled contraindications to the requested agent and is intended to be used consistently with the FDA approved label.

Zulresso (brexanolone) is considered INVESTIGATIONAL in all other situations.

Note: Zulresso must be administered to patients through a certified REMS program as part of the FDA approval regulations. Providers and facilities administering Zulresso, must be registered with the REMS program.
Table 1. Diagnostic Criteria for a Major Depressive Episode

Criteria

A Five or more symptoms for 2 weeks (one of which must be either depressed mood or anhedonia)

1. Depressed mood most of the day nearly every day
2. Anhedonia most of the day nearly every day
3. Significant weight loss or gain
4. Insomnia or hypersomnia
5. Psychomotor agitation or retardation
6. Fatigue or loss of energy
7. Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt
8. Diminished ability to think or concentrate; indecisiveness
9. Recurrent thoughts of death; suicidal ideation or attempt

B Symptoms cause clinically significant distress or functional impairment

C The episode is not attributable to the physiological effects of a substance or another medical condition

D The episode is not better explained by a psychotic illness

E There has never been a manic or hypomanic episode

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commercial Managed Care (HMO and POS)</th>
<th>Prior authorization is required*</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial PPO and Indemnity</td>
<td>Prior authorization is required*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicare HMO BlueSM</td>
<td>Prior authorization is required*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medicare PPO BlueSM</td>
<td>Prior authorization is required*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Prior Authorization Request Form: Zulresso (brexanalone) for the Treatment of Post-partum Depression

This form must be completed and faxed to: Medical and Surgical: 1-888-282-0780; Medicare Advantage: 1-800-447-2994.
Click here for Zulresso (brexanalone) Treatment for Post-partum Depression authorization form #148

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.

The following codes are included below for informational purposes only; this is not an all-inclusive list.

The above medical necessity criteria MUST be met for the following codes to be covered for Commercial Members: Managed Care (HMO and POS), PPO, Indemnity, Medicare HMO Blue and Medicare PPO Blue:

HCPCS Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HCPCS codes:</th>
<th>Code Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C9399</td>
<td>Unclassified drugs or biologicals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**ICD-10 Procedure Codes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICD-10-PCS codes:</th>
<th>Code Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XW033F3</td>
<td>Introduction of Other New Technology Therapeutic Substance into Peripheral Vein, Percutaneous Approach, New Technology Group 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following ICD Diagnosis Code is considered medically necessary when submitted with the codes above if **medical necessity criteria** are met:

**ICD-10 Diagnosis Codes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICD-10-CM Diagnosis codes:</th>
<th>Code Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F53.0</td>
<td>Postpartum depression</td>
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**Description**

Postpartum depression is a serious and debilitating condition that is characterized by a major depressive episode temporally and pathophysiologically related to pregnancy. It is similar to other forms of depression and characterized by sadness and/or anhedonia and may present with symptoms such as cognitive impairment, feelings of worthlessness or guilt, or suicidal ideation. Brexanolone is chemically similar to endogenous hormone allopregnanolone, which is a positive allosteric modulator of GABA\(\alpha\) (\(\gamma\) aminobutyric acid-ligand gated chloride channel) receptors. The levels of endogenous allopregnanolone increases during pregnancy, reach a peak during the third trimester but fall abruptly after delivery. It is hypothesized that a one-time administration of brexanolone infusion ameliorates symptoms of postpartum depression via positive allosteric modulation of both synaptic and extrasynaptic GABA\(\alpha\) receptors. The number of patients who may qualify to receive brexanolone is currently unknown.

**Summary**

For individuals with postpartum depression who receive brexanolone, the evidence includes 3 randomized, placebo-controlled trials in which 247 patients were randomized to brexanolone 60 \(\mu\)g/kg/h (n=38), brexanolone 90 \(\mu\)g/kg/h (n=102) and placebo (n=107). The relevant outcomes are change in disease status, quality of life, and treatment-related mortality and morbidity. The primary efficacy endpoint of change from baseline in the 17-item Hamilton Depression Rating Scale total score at 60 hours resulted in significant and clinically meaningful reductions in the 17-item Hamilton Depression Rating Scale total score compared with placebo. Brexanolone was associated with a greater frequency of sedation-related side effects than placebo including sudden loss of consciousness in six patients. Characterization of the safety of brexanolone was inadequate due to notable study limitations. These include exposure to study drug in a limited number of patients in a controlled setting and a relatively short follow-up of 30 days. The observed loss of consciousness during drug infusion is part of the basis for a Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy requirement. The evidence is sufficient to determine that the technology results in a meaningful improvement in the net health outcome.

**Policy History**

<table>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tr>
<td>9/2019</td>
<td>Policy clarified to state that Zulresso™ must be administered in the inpatient setting.</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
References


Endnotes

1 Based on expert opinion