MASSACHUSETTS

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Medical Policy

Melanoma Vaccines

Table of Contents

Policy Number: 453

BCBSA Reference Number: 2.03.04

Related Policies

- Adoptive Immunotherapy, #455

Policy

Commercial Members: Managed Care (HMO and POS), PPO, and Indemnity Medicare HMO Blue℠ and Medicare PPO Blue℠ Members

Melanoma vaccines are considered **INVESTIGATIONAL**.

Prior Authorization Information

Pre-service approval is required for all inpatient services for all products.
See below for situations where prior authorization may be required or may not be required for outpatient services.
Yes indicates that prior authorization is required.
No indicates that prior authorization is not required.
N/A indicates that this service is primarily performed in an inpatient setting.

	Outpatient
Commercial Managed Care (HMO and POS)	This is not a covered service.
Commercial PPO and Indemnity	This is not a covered service.
Medicare HMO Blue℠	This is not a covered service.
Medicare PPO Blue℠	This is not a covered service.

CPT Codes / HCPCS Codes / ICD-9 Codes

The following codes are included below for informational purposes. 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
There is no specific CPT code for this service.

Description
Tumor vaccines are a type of active immunotherapy that attempts to stimulate the patient's own immune system to respond to tumor antigens. Melanoma has been viewed as a particularly promising tumor for this type of treatment because of its immunologic features, which include the prognostic importance of lymphocytic infiltrate at the primary tumor site, the expression of a wide variety of antigens, and the occasional occurrence of spontaneous remissions. Melanoma vaccines can be generally categorized or prepared in a variety of ways.

Summary
Despite considerable interest and numerous studies over the past 20 years, to date no melanoma vaccine has been shown to demonstrate safety and efficacy in a well-controlled published Phase III clinical trial and no vaccine treatment for this cancer has been approved by FDA. A wide range of vaccine choices are available including use of autologous tumor cells, allogeneic tumor cells, and tumor-specific moieties including peptides, gangliosides, and DNA plasmids. A variety of mechanisms appear to exist as possible obstacles to successful active immunotherapy using vaccines. Current studies are focused on the use of new and different vaccine preparations, as well as on various forms of immune-modulation as potential techniques for enhancing vaccine effectiveness.

Policy History
Date	Action
7/2015	New references added from BCBSA National medical policy.
6/2013	New references from BCBSA National medical policy.
11/2011-4/2012	Medical policy ICD 10 remediation: Formatting, editing and coding updates. No changes to policy statements.
1/17/2012	BCBSA National medical policy review. No changes to policy statements.
7/2011	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Hematology and Oncology. No changes to policy statements.
9/2010	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Hematology and Oncology. No changes to policy statements.
4/2010	BCBSA National medical policy review. No changes to policy statements.
9/2009	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Hematology and Oncology. No changes to policy statements.
10/2008	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Hematology and Oncology. No changes to policy statements.
9/2008	BCBSA National medical policy review. No changes to policy statements
11/2007	BCBSA National medical policy review. No changes to policy statements.

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

Clinical Exception Process
Medical Technology Assessment Guidelines

References

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