Clinical Policy: Benznidazole
Reference Number: CP.PMN.90
Effective Date: 03.01.18
Last Review Date: 02.21
Line of Business: Commercial, HIM, Medicaid

See Important Reminder at the end of this policy for important regulatory and legal information.

Description
Benznidazole is a nitroimidazole antimicrobial.

FDA Approved Indication(s)
Benznidazole is indicated in pediatric patients 2 to 12 years of age for the treatment of Chagas disease (American trypanosomiasis), caused by *Trypanosoma cruzi* (*T. cruzi*).

This indication is approved under accelerated approval based on the number of treated patients who became Immunoglobulin G (IgG) antibody negative against the recombinant antigens of *T. cruzi*. Continued approval for this indication may be contingent upon verification and description of clinical benefit in confirmatory trials.

Policy/Criteria
Provider must submit documentation (including such as office chart notes, lab results or other clinical information) supporting that member has met all approval criteria.

It is the policy of health plans affiliated with Centene Corporation® that benznidazole is medically necessary when the following criteria are met:

I. Initial Approval Criteria
   A. Chagas Disease (must meet all):
      1. Diagnosis of Chagas disease confirmed by one of the following (a, b, or c) (see Appendix D):
         a. Detection of circulating *T. cruzi* trypomastigotes on microscopy;
         b. Detection of *T. cruzi* DNA by polymerase chain reaction assay;
         c. Two positive diagnostic serologic tests showing IgG antibodies to *T. cruzi* and meeting both of the following (i and ii):
            i. The two tests use different techniques (e.g., enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay [ELISA], immunofluorescent antibody test [IFA]);
            ii. The two tests use different antigens (e.g., whole-parasite lysate, recombinant antigens);
      2. Prescribed by or in consultation with an infectious disease specialist;
      3. Member has not yet received 60 days of benznidazole therapy for the current infection;
      4. Dose (weight-based) does not exceed 400 mg per day (see Appendix D for off-label dosing requests).

Approval duration: 60 days total
B. Other diagnoses/indications
   1. Refer to the off-label use policy for the relevant line of business if diagnosis is NOT
      specifically listed under section III (Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is
      NOT authorized): CP.CPA.09 for commercial, HIM.PA.154 for health insurance
      marketplace and CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid.

II. Continued Therapy
   A. **Chagas Disease** (must meet all):
      1. Currently receiving medication via Centene benefit or member has previously met
         initial approval criteria;
      2. Member has not yet received 60 days of benznidazole therapy for the current
         infection;
      3. If request is for a dose increase, new dose (weight-based) does not exceed 400 mg per
         day *(see Appendix D for off-label dosing requests)*.
      Approval duration: 60 days total
   
   B. Other diagnoses/indications (must meet 1 or 2):
      1. Currently receiving medication via Centene benefit and documentation supports
         positive response to therapy.
         Approval duration: **Duration of request or 60 days (whichever is less)**; or
      2. Refer to the off-label use policy for the relevant line of business if diagnosis is NOT
         specifically listed under section III (Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is
         NOT authorized): CP.CPA.09 for commercial, HIM.PA.154 for health insurance
         marketplace and CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid.

III. Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is NOT authorized:
   A. Non-FDA approved indications, which are not addressed in this policy, unless there is
      sufficient documentation of efficacy and safety according to the off label use policies –
      CP.CPA.09 for commercial, HIM.PA.154 for health insurance marketplace and
      CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid or evidence of coverage documents.

IV. Appendices/General Information
   **Appendix A: Abbreviation/Acronym Key**
   - CDC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
   - IgG: immunoglobulin G
   - T cruzi: *Trypanosoma cruzi*
   - WHO: World Health Organization

   **Appendix B: Therapeutic Alternatives**
   Not applicable

   **Appendix C: Contraindications/Boxed Warnings**
   - Contraindication(s):
     - Benznidazole tablets are contraindicated in patients with a history of hypersensitivity
       reaction to benznidazole or other nitroimidazole derivatives. Reactions have included
       severe skin and soft tissue reactions.
Benznidazole tablets are contraindicated in patients who have taken disulfiram within the last two weeks. Psychotic reactions may occur in patients who are using benznidazole and disulfiram concurrently.

 Consumption of alcoholic beverages or products containing propylene glycol is contraindicated in patients during and for at least 3 days after therapy with benznidazole tablets. A disulfiram-like reaction (abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting, headaches, and flushing) may occur due to the interaction between alcohol or propylene glycol and benznidazole.

- Boxed warning(s): None reported

**Appendix D: General Information**

- **Diagnostic tests:**
  - Laboratories offering testing for Chagas disease include ARUP Laboratories, Mayo Clinic Laboratories, and Quest Diagnostics. IgG serology is performed in the majority of cases. After obtaining initial serologic IgG test results, providers should consult their state health department and the CDC for guidance on serologic confirmation. If two results are discordant, a third assay may be needed. Donor screening tests and Immunoglobulin M (IgM) serology tests are not considered diagnostic tests.

- Off-label dosing requests for Chagas disease:
  - Dosing for populations outside FDA-approved age ranges or for longer than 60 days may be appropriate and should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. See CDC consultation resources below for questions.

- State reporting requirements:
  - According to the CDC ([https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6726a2.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6726a2.htm)), in 2017 Chagas disease was reportable in six states: Arizona, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas.

- Consultation resources:
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
    - Parasitic Diseases: [https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/chagas/](https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/chagas/) - 404-718-4745, chagas@cdc.gov
    - CDC Drug Service: 404-639-3670
    - CDC Emergency Operations Center: 770-488-7100
  - World Health Organization (WHO)
    - Outside the US: [www.who.int/chagas/home_treatment/en/](http://www.who.int/chagas/home_treatment/en/)
  - American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene
    - Directory of consultants: [http://www.astmh.org/education-resources/clinical-consultants-directory](http://www.astmh.org/education-resources/clinical-consultants-directory)
V. Dosage and Administration

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<th>Dosing Regimen</th>
<th>Maximum Dose</th>
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<tr>
<td>Body Weight Range (kg)</td>
<td>Dose (mg)</td>
<td>Tablet # - 12.5 mg</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt; 15 kg</td>
<td>50 mg</td>
<td>4 T</td>
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<td>15 to &lt; 20 kg</td>
<td>62.5 mg</td>
<td>5 T</td>
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<td>20 to &lt; 30 kg</td>
<td>75 mg</td>
<td>6 T</td>
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<td>30 to &lt; 40 kg</td>
<td>100 mg</td>
<td>1 T</td>
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<td>40 to &lt; 60 kg</td>
<td>150 mg</td>
<td>1 ½ T</td>
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<tr>
<td>≥ 60 kg</td>
<td>200 mg</td>
<td>2 T</td>
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VI. Product Availability

Tablets: 12.5 mg (not scored) or 100 mg (scored for halves or quarters)

VII. References


Pivotal Trials


Centers for Disease Control (CDC)


Compendia, Guidelines, and Review Articles


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals</th>
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<td>10.17.17</td>
<td>02.18</td>
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**Important Reminder**

This clinical policy has been developed by appropriately experienced and licensed health care professionals based on a review and consideration of currently available generally accepted standards of medical practice; peer-reviewed medical literature; government agency/program approval status; evidence-based guidelines and positions of leading national health professional organizations; views of physicians practicing in relevant clinical areas affected by this clinical policy; and other available clinical information. The Health Plan makes no representations and accepts no liability with respect to the content of any external information used or relied upon in developing this clinical policy. This clinical policy is consistent with standards of medical practice current at the time that this clinical policy was approved. “Health Plan” means a health plan that has adopted this clinical policy and that is operated or administered, in whole or in part, by Centene Management Company, LLC, or any of such health plan’s affiliates, as applicable.

The purpose of this clinical policy is to provide a guide to medical necessity, which is a component of the guidelines used to assist in making coverage decisions and administering benefits. It does not constitute a contract or guarantee regarding payment or results. Coverage
decisions and the administration of benefits are subject to all terms, conditions, exclusions and limitations of the coverage documents (e.g., evidence of coverage, certificate of coverage, policy, contract of insurance, etc.), as well as to state and federal requirements and applicable Health Plan-level administrative policies and procedures.

This clinical policy is effective as of the date determined by the Health Plan. The date of posting may not be the effective date of this clinical policy. This clinical policy may be subject to applicable legal and regulatory requirements relating to provider notification. If there is a discrepancy between the effective date of this clinical policy and any applicable legal or regulatory requirement, the requirements of law and regulation shall govern. The Health Plan retains the right to change, amend or withdraw this clinical policy, and additional clinical policies may be developed and adopted as needed, at any time.

This clinical policy does not constitute medical advice, medical treatment or medical care. It is not intended to dictate to providers how to practice medicine. Providers are expected to exercise professional medical judgment in providing the most appropriate care, and are solely responsible for the medical advice and treatment of members. This clinical policy is not intended to recommend treatment for members. Members should consult with their treating physician in connection with diagnosis and treatment decisions.

Providers referred to in this clinical policy are independent contractors who exercise independent judgment and over whom the Health Plan has no control or right of control. Providers are not agents or employees of the Health Plan.

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Note:
For Medicaid members, when state Medicaid coverage provisions conflict with the coverage provisions in this clinical policy, state Medicaid coverage provisions take precedence. Please refer to the state Medicaid manual for any coverage provisions pertaining to this clinical policy.

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