

Medicare Advantage Medical Policy



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of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

Positron Emission Tomography (PET) for Miscellaneous Applications (Non-Cardiac, Non-Oncologic) – Medicare Advantage

Medicare Advantage Plan

- ☒ Medicare Plus BlueSM
- ☒ BCN AdvantageSM

UM Committee Approval Date: 1/28/2026

Effective Date: 2/28/2026

Description

Positron Emission Tomography (PET) is a non-invasive, medical imaging technique that uses small amounts of radioactive tracers to visualize and measure various physiological processes in the body. During a PET scan, a small amount of radioactive tracer, typically attached to a glucose molecule (such as Fluorodeoxyglucose, or FDG), is injected into the patient's bloodstream. The tracer accumulates in areas of high metabolic activity, such as growing cancer cells, inflamed tissues, or areas of high neuronal activity in the brain. As the tracer decays, it emits positrons, which are the antiparticles of electrons. When a positron meets an electron, the two particles annihilate each other, releasing a pair of gamma rays that travel in opposite directions. The PET scanner detects these gamma rays using specialized detectors, which are arranged in a ring around the patient.

Related Medical Coverage Policies

- Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Scans for Cardiac Applications
 - Positron Emission Tomography (PET) for Oncologic Applications
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Policy Guidelines

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) and Blue Care Network of Michigan (BCN) adhere to guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), including when performing organization determinations for Medicare Advantage plan members. CMS Medicare statutes, regulations, manuals, National Coverage Determinations (NCDs), Local Coverage Determinations (LCDs), Local Coverage Articles (LCAs) and other sub-regulatory guidance provide the clinical guidelines for coverage determinations, payment integrity functions, and all other uses by CMS regulations. When CMS Medicare guidance is silent, incomplete, or insufficient, CMS permits BCBSM/BCN to utilize "internal coverage criteria", such as independent criteria, health plan policy research, LCD/LCAs outside the services area

or research from independent medical research repositories (i.e., Hayes) for coverage policies 42 CFR § 422.101. BCBSM/BCN internal medical coverage policies are developed and based on current evidence in widely accepted treatment guidelines or clinical literature; in addition, they address how clinical benefits may or may not outweigh member harm.

Clinical review follows guidance provided in the BCBSM Medicare Advantage Coverage Determination Hierarchy policy, which may be found at <https://www.bcbsm.com/providers/mpradmin/> by entering the policy name.

Coverage Guidance

To ensure consistency with coverage guidance, the Medicare statutes, regulations, coverage manuals, NCD, LCD, and LCA should be reviewed and applied first. BCBSM/BCN internal coverage criteria should only be applied when CMS guidance is silent, incomplete, or insufficient for a code.

Apart from durable medical equipment (DME), Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC) jurisdiction for the purpose of clinical determination is based upon place of service. The place of service for laboratory testing is defined as the geographic location of the reference laboratory. Non-jurisdictional LCD/LCAs may not be utilized for a determination unless they have been specifically identified as internal coverage criteria by the policy. Alternatively, jurisdiction for DME MAC is determined by the member place of residence. Please see CMS Medicare Administrative Contractors (MAC) table for state MAC assignments below.

CMS Guidance	Additional Guidance
National Regulatory Guidance IOM 100-04,17, 80.12 – Coverage for PET scans for Dementia and Neurodegenerative Diseases NCD with CED (Coverage with Evidence Development): Amyloid PET: CAG-00431R – Beta Amyloid Positron Emission Tomography in Dementia and Neurodegenerative Disease - Retired: October 13, 2023, CMS removed NCD 220.6.20 from Publication 100-03, the NCD Manual, ending coverage with evidence development (CED) for positron emission tomography (PET) beta amyloid imaging and permitting Medicare coverage determinations for PET beta amyloid imaging to be made by the Medicare Administrative Contractors under section 1862(a)(1)(A) of the Social Security Act. FDG PET: CAG-00088R - Positron Emission Tomography (FDG) and Other Neuroimaging Devices for Suspected Dementia FDG-PET are non-covered when furnished outside of a CMS approved CED Study. To access the list of studies that have been determined to meet the requirements for CED coverage, please visit CMS site for Coverage with Evidence Development at:	BCBSM/BCN will follow CMS guidance as the primary source for coverage determinations. However, in instances where CMS guidance is silent, incomplete, or insufficient for a particular code, BCBSM/BCN internal coverage criteria will be applied to ensure consistent and informed decision-making. In such cases, please refer to the relevant BCBSM/BCN policy for guidance: <i>Positron Emission Tomography (PET) for Miscellaneous Applications (Non-Cardiac, Non-Oncologic)</i> To access this policy, please visit the BCBSM Medical Policy Router Search page at https://www.bcbsm.com/providers/mpradmin/ and enter the policy name in the search field.

<https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Coverage/Coverage-with-Evidence-Development/>

National Coverage Determinations

220.6.13 - FDG PET for Dementia and Neurodegenerative Diseases

220.6.9 - FDG PET for Refractory Seizures

Local Coverage Determinations and Articles

WPS

None

CGS

L39521, A59318 - Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Scan for Inflammation and Infection

First Coast

A59049 - Billing and Coding: NCD Coding Article for Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Scans Used for Non-Oncologic Conditions

NGS

None

Noridian JE

None

Noridian JF

None

Novitas

A53134 - Billing and Coding: NCD Coding Article for Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Scans Used for Non-Oncologic Conditions

Palmetto

None

Code	Description
78608	Brain imaging, positron emission tomography (PET); metabolic evaluation
78609	Brain imaging, positron emission tomography (PET); perfusion evaluation
78811	Positron emission tomography (PET) imaging; limited area (e.g., chest, head/neck)
78812	Positron emission tomography (PET) imaging; skull base to mid-thigh
78813	Positron emission tomography (PET) imaging; whole body
78814	Positron emission tomography imaging with concurrently acquired computed tomography (CT) for attenuation correction and anatomical localization imaging; limited area (e.g., chest, head/neck)
78815	Positron emission tomography imaging with concurrently acquired computed tomography (CT) for attenuation correction and anatomical localization imaging; skull base to mid-thigh
78816	Positron emission tomography imaging with concurrently acquired computed tomography (CT) for attenuation correction and anatomical localization imaging; whole body
A9552	Fluorodeoxyglucose F-18 FDG, diagnostic, per study dose, up to 45 mCi
A9601	Flortaucipir F 18 injection, diagnostic, 1 mCi
A9602	Fluorodopa F-18, diagnostic, per mCi

Code	Description
Q9982	Flutemetamol F18, diagnostic, per study dose, up to 5 millicuries
Q9983	Florbetaben F18, diagnostic, per study dose, up to 8.1 millicuries

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HCPCS® codes, descriptions and materials are copyrighted by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

The above information is current as of the review date for this policy. However, the coverage issues and policies maintained by CMS are updated and/or revised periodically. Therefore, the most current CMS information may not be contained in this document.

Please refer to the Medicare Coverage Database website at <https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/search.aspx> for the most current applicable NCD, LCD, LCA, and CMS Online Manual System Transmittals.

CMS Medicare Administrative Contractors (MAC) Jurisdictions Guidance

Part A and Part B MAC Jurisdictions	
Wisconsin Physicians Service Insurance Corporation (WPS)	IA, IN, KS, MI, MO, NE
CGS Administrators, LLC	KY, OH
First Coast Service Options, Inc	FL, PR, US VI
National Government Services, Inc (NGS)	CT, IL, MA, ME, MN, NH, NY, RI, VT, WI,
Noridian Healthcare Solutions, LLC, Jurisdiction JE	CA, HI, NV, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands
Noridian Healthcare Solutions, LLC, Jurisdiction JF	AK, AZ, ID, MT, ND, OR, SD, UT, WA, WY
Novitas Solutions, Inc	AR, CO, DC, DE, LA, MD, MS, NJ, NM, OK, PA, TX,
Palmetto GBA	AL, GA, TN NC, SC, VA, WV
DME MAC Jurisdictions	
CGS Administrators, LLC, Jurisdictions JB and JC	AL, AR, CO, FL, GA, IL, IN, KY, LA, MI, MN, MS, NM, NC, OH, OK, Puerto Rico, SC, TN, TX, VA, Virgin Island, WI, WV
Noridian Healthcare Solutions, LLC, Jurisdictions JA and JD	AK, American Soamoa, AZ, CA, CT, DE, DC, Guam, HI, ID, IA, KS, MA, MD, ME, MO, MT, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NV, NY, Northern Mariana Islands, OR, PA, RI, SD, UT, VT, WA, WY

Important Reminder

BCBSM and BCN follow CMS Medicare coverage guidance to limit coverage to items and services that are reasonable and necessary for the diagnosis or treatment of an illness or injury or to improve the functioning of a malformed body member. Medicare Advantage Medical Policies list the criteria BCBSM and BCN use to decide which medical services are considered “reasonable and necessary” when Medicare coverage rules are not fully developed, or as otherwise may permitted by CMS Medicare regulations. Individual member benefit plan documents, such as the Evidence of Coverage and Annual Notice of Change, as well as applicable laws govern benefit coverage, including any inclusion, exclusion, and/or other restrictions.

Medicare Advantage Medical policies are created when permitted by CMS Medicare regulations, reviewed regularly, and may be revised periodically. BCBSM/BCN Medical Policies are proprietary and should not be copied or disseminated without the express, prior

written approval of BCBSM. All providers are required to review applicable BCBSM reimbursement policies prior to claim submission and bill for covered services in accordance with those policies. Additionally, providers contracted with BCBSM or BCN's Medicare Advantage network(s) should review the provider manual for any additional claim submission requirements. Providers not contracted with BCBSM or BCN's Medicare Advantage network may be required to submit documentation to BCBSM, BCN, or its delegated entity supporting billed claims, including but not limited to applicable medical records.

Note: U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval for a specific indication or the issuance of a CPT code is not sufficient for a procedure to be considered medically reasonable and necessary. Similarly, the presence of a procedure/device code or payment amount for the service in the Medicare fee schedule does not necessarily indicate coverage. If a service is deemed not reasonable and necessary, to treat illness or injury for any reason (including lack of safety and efficacy because it is an experimental procedure, etc.), the procedure is considered not covered.

Disclaimer: This medical policy is not an authorization, certification, explanation of benefits, or a contract for the services, devices, or drugs that is referenced in the medical policy. Medical policies do not constitute medical advice and do not guarantee any results or outcomes or guarantee payment. The medical policy is not intended to replace independent medical judgment for the treatment of individuals. Treating physicians and health care providers are solely responsible for determining what care to provide to their patients. Identification of selected brand names of devices, tests and procedures in a medical coverage policy is for reference only and is not an endorsement of any one device, test, or procedure over another.

Pursuant to Section 1557 and Section 504, Blue Cross does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex (including sex characteristics, intersex traits; pregnancy or related conditions; sexual orientation; gender identity, and sex stereotypes). This includes our rules, benefit designs and medical policies.

BCBSM/BCN Medicare Advantage Policy History

Policy Effective Date	UM Committee Approval Date	Comments
08/17/2024	07/17/2024	Medicare Advantage policy established
8/16/2025	7/16/2025	MA policy foundational language updated. Adoption of JUMP policy updates.
2/28/2026	1/28/2026	Adoption of JUMP policy updates. CMS NCD CED language added to policy