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P&T Date: 08/13/2026

Zanvastro (zilganersen)

HCPCS: J3590

Policy:

Requests must be supported by submission of chart notes and patient specific documentation.

- A. Coverage of the requested drug is provided when all the following are met:
 - a. FDA approved indication
 - b. FDA approved age
 - c. Confirmation of a pathologic variant in the GFAP gene
 - d. Trial and failure, contraindication, OR intolerance to the preferred drugs as listed in BCBSM/BCN's utilization management medical drug list
- B. Quantity Limitations, Authorization Period and Renewal Criteria
 - a. Quantity Limit: Align with FDA recommended dosing
 - b. Authorization Period: One year at a time
 - c. Renewal Criteria: Clinical documentation must be provided to confirm that current criteria are met and that the medication is providing clinical benefit

***Note: Coverage and approval duration may differ for Medicare Part B members based on any applicable criteria outlined in Local Coverage Determinations (LCD) or National Coverage Determinations (NCD) as determined by Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). See the CMS website at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/>. Determination of coverage of Part B drugs is based on medically accepted indications which have supported citations included or approved for inclusion determined by CMS approved compendia.

Background Information:

- AxD is a rare, genetic, and ultimately fatal neurologic leukodystrophy that arises from a pathogenic variant in the GFAP gene
- It is characterized by excess production and accumulation of GFAP in astrocytes
- There are two forms, type I, which generally has an onset by age 4, and type II, which can have onset at any age, but primarily after age 4

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- Symptoms associated with the type I form include a failure to thrive, psychomotor impairment, seizures, macrocephaly, spasticity, ataxia, vomiting, and difficulty swallowing, coughing, breathing, or talking
- Patients with type II AxD typically present with bulbar/pseudobulbar symptoms, ataxia, and spasticity
- AxD has been estimated to occur at a frequency of about 1 in 1 million births
- There are no guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of AxD
- Diagnosis established based upon clinical and radiographic (MRI) features with diagnosis confirmed via genetic testing showing a pathogenic variant of the GFAP gene
- Four of the 5 MRI characteristics listed below should be present for diagnosis
 - Extensive cerebral white matter changes with frontal predominance
 - Abnormalities of the basal ganglia and thalami with T2/fluid-attenuated inversion recovery (FLAIR) signal abnormality and/or swelling
 - A periventricular rim of high signal on T1-weighted sequences and low signal on T2-weighted sequences
 - Abnormalities of the brainstem, mainly involving the midbrain and medulla
 - Contrast enhancement involving one or more of the following gray and white matter structures:
 - Ventricular lining
 - Periventricular tissue
 - Frontal white matter
 - Optic chiasm
 - Fornix
 - Basal ganglia
 - Thalamus
 - Dentate nucleus
 - Brainstem
- Treatment is symptomatic and supportive and includes antiseizure medications, baclofen, and benzodiazepines

References:

1. PR Newswire. Zilganersen granted U.S. FDA fast track designation for people living with Alexander disease. 2024 Oct 1. Available at: <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/zilganersen-granted-us-fda-fast-track-designation-for-people-living-with-alexander-disease-302263365.html>. Accessed on June 9, 2026.
2. Clinicaltrials.gov. A study to evaluate the safety and efficacy of zilganersen (ION373) in patients with Alexander disease (AxD) (NCT04849741). Available at: <https://clinicaltrials.gov/study/NCT04849741>. Accessed on June 9, 2026.
3. Ionis Pharmaceuticals. Ionis announces positive topline results from pivotal study of zilganersen in Alexander disease. 2025 Sept 22. Available at: <https://ir.ionis.com/news-releases/news-release-details/ionis-announces-positive-topline-results-pivotal-study>. Accessed on June 9, 2026.
4. Ionis Pharmaceuticals. Ionis presents new data from pivotal study of zilganersen in Alexander disease (AxD) at AAN 2026 annual meeting. 2026 April 21. Available at: <https://ir.ionis.com/news-releases/news-release-details/ionis-presents-new-data-pivotal-study-zilganersen-alexander>. Accessed on June 9, 2026.
5. National Organization of Rare Disorders. Alexander disease. 2017 Feb 1. Available at: <https://rarediseases.org/rare-diseases/alexander-disease/>. Accessed on June 9, 2026.
6. Adang LA, Sherbini O, Ball L, et al. Revised consensus statement on the preventive and symptomatic care of patients with leukodystrophies. Mol Genet Metab. 2017; 122 (1-2): 18 – 32.
7. van der Knaap MS, Naidu S, Breiter SN, et al. Alexander disease: diagnosis with MR imaging. AJNR Am J Neuroradiol. 2001; 22 (3): 541.

Policy History		
#	Date	Change Description
1.0	Effective Date: 08/13/2026	Preliminary Drug Review

* The prescribing information for a drug is subject to change. To ensure you are reading the most current information it is advised that you reference the most updated prescribing information by visiting the drug or manufacturer website or <http://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/index.cfm>.