

Clinical Policy: Anticonvulsants

Reference Number: PHW.PDL.056

Effective Date: 01/01/2020

Last Review Date: 11/2025

Policy/Criteria

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

It is the policy of PA Health and Wellness[®] that Anticonvulsants are **medically necessary** when the following criteria are met:

I. Requirements for Prior Authorization of Anticonvulsants

A. Prescriptions That Require Prior Authorization

Prescriptions for Anticonvulsants that meet any of the following conditions must be prior authorized:

1. A non-preferred Anticonvulsant. See the Preferred Drug List (PDL) for the list of preferred Anticonvulsants at: <https://papdl.com/preferred-drug-list>.
2. An Anticonvulsant with a prescribed quantity that exceeds the quantity limit.
3. A prescription for Epidiolex (cannabidiol).
4. A prescription for clonazepam when prescribed for a member under 21 years of age.
5. A prescription for clonazepam when there is a record of a recent paid claim for another benzodiazepine (excluding clobazam and benzodiazepines indicated for the acute treatment of increased seizure activity) (therapeutic duplication).
6. A prescription for a clonazepam when there is a record of 2 or more paid claims for any benzodiazepine (excluding clobazam and benzodiazepines indicated for the acute treatment of increased seizure activity) within the past 30 days.
7. A prescription for clonazepam when a member has a concurrent prescription for a buprenorphine agent indicated for the treatment of opioid use disorder.

B. Review of Documentation for Medical Necessity

In evaluating a request for prior authorization of a prescription for an Anticonvulsant, the determination of whether the requested prescription is medically necessary will take into account whether the member:

1. For a non-preferred Anticonvulsant, **one** of the following:
 - a. Has a current history (within the past 90 days) of being prescribed the same non-preferred Anticonvulsant (does not apply to non-preferred brands when the therapeutically equivalent generic is preferred or to non-preferred generics when the therapeutically equivalent brand is preferred)
 - b. **All** of the following:
 - i. **One** of the following:
 - a) For a diagnosis of a seizure disorder, has a documented history of therapeutic failure of or a contraindication or an intolerance to **two** preferred Anticonvulsants approved or medically accepted for the member's diagnosis (therapeutic failure of preferred Anticonvulsants must include the generic equivalent when the generic equivalent is designated as preferred);
 - b) For all other diagnoses, has a documented history of therapeutic failure of or a contraindication or an intolerance to the preferred Anticonvulsants approved or medically accepted for the member's diagnosis (therapeutic failure of preferred Anticonvulsants must include the generic equivalent when the generic equivalent is designated as preferred);
 - ii. Is being treated for a diagnosis that is indicated in the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved package labeling OR a medically accepted indication,
 - iii. Is prescribed a dose that is consistent with FDA-approved package labeling, nationally recognized compendia, or peer-reviewed medical literature,
 - iv. Is age-appropriate according to FDA-approved package labeling, nationally recognized compendia, or peer-reviewed medical literature;

AND

2. For Epidiolex (cannabidiol), one of the following:
 - a. Has a history of therapeutic failure of or a contraindication or an intolerance to two Anticonvulsants approved or medically accepted for the member's diagnosis
 - b. Has a history of seizures associated with Lennox-Gastaut syndrome, Dravet syndrome, or tuberous sclerosis complex;

AND

3. For clonazepam, **all** of the following:
 - a. For a member under 21 years of age, **one** of the following:

- i. Has a diagnosis of **one** of the following:
 - a) Seizure disorder,
 - b) Chemotherapy induced nausea and vomiting,
 - c) Cerebral palsy,
 - d) Spastic disorder,
 - e) Dystonia,
 - f) Catatonia
 - ii. Is receiving palliative care,
- b. For therapeutic duplication of clonazepam with another benzodiazepine, **one** of the following:
- i. Is being titrated to or tapered from another benzodiazepine
 - ii. Has a medical reason for concomitant use of the requested medications that is supported by peer-reviewed literature or national treatment guidelines,
- c. When there is a record of 2 or more paid claims for any benzodiazepine, **both** of the following:
- i. The multiple prescriptions are consistent with medically accepted prescribing practices and standards of care, including support from peer-reviewed literature or national treatment guidelines
 - ii. The multiple prescriptions are written by the same prescriber or, if written by different prescribers, all prescribers are aware of the other prescription(s),
- d. For a member with a concurrent prescription for a buprenorphine agent indicated for the treatment of opioid use disorder, **both** of the following:
- i. Is prescribed the buprenorphine agent and clonazepam by the same prescriber or, if prescribed by different prescribers, all prescribers are aware of the other prescription(s)
 - ii. Has an acute need for therapy with clonazepam;

AND

4. If a prescription for an Anticonvulsant is for a quantity that exceeds the quantity limit, the determination of whether the prescription is medically necessary will also take into account the guidelines set forth in PA.CP.PMN.59 Quantity Limit Override.

NOTE: If the member does not meet the clinical review guidelines listed above but, in the professional judgment of the physician reviewer, the services are medically necessary to meet the medical needs of the member, the request for prior authorization will be approved.

C. Clinical Review Process

Prior authorization personnel will review the request for prior authorization and apply the clinical guidelines in Section B. above to assess the medical necessity of a prescription for an Anticonvulsant. If the guidelines in Section B. are met, the reviewer will prior authorize the prescription. If the guidelines are not met, the prior authorization request will be referred to a physician reviewer for a medical necessity determination. Such a request for prior authorization will be approved when, in the professional judgment of the physician reviewer, the services are medically necessary to meet the medical needs of the member.

D. Automated Prior Authorization

Prior authorization of a prescription for Epidiolex (cannabidiol) will be automatically approved when the point-of-sale on-line claims adjudication system verifies a record of a diagnosis code for Lennox-Gastaut syndrome, Dravet syndrome, or tuberous sclerosis complex or paid claims within 365 days prior to the date of service that documents that the guidelines to determine medical necessity listed in Section B. have been met.

E. **Approval Duration: 12 months**

F. References

1. Epidiolex (cannabidiol) Prescribing Information. Jazz Pharmaceuticals, Inc. March 2024.

Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals	Date
Policy created	01/01/2020
Q3 2020 annual review: no changes.	07/2020
Q1 2021: policy revised according to DHS revisions effective 01/05/2021.	11/2020
Q1 2022: policy revised according to DHS revisions effective 01/03/2022.	10/2021
Q1 2022: policy revised according to DHS revisions effective 03/07/2022.	03/2022
Q1 2023 annual review: no changes.	11/2022
Q1 2024 annual review: no changes.	11/2023
Q1 2025: policy revised according to DHS revisions effective 01/06/2025.	11/2024
Q1 2026 annual review: no changes.	11/2025