

Topical Pain Patches

Medical Advantage Medical Policy # MA-115

Original Effective Date: 08/01/2025

Current Effective Date: 08/01/2025

Applies to all products administered or underwritten by the Health Plan, unless otherwise provided in the applicable contract. Medical technology is constantly evolving, and we reserve the right to review and update Medical Policy periodically.

When Services May Be Eligible for Coverage

Coverage for eligible medical treatments or procedures, drugs, devices or biological products may be provided only if:

- *Benefits are available in the member's contract/certificate, and*
- *Medical necessity criteria and guidelines are met.*

Based on review of available data, the Health Plan may consider capsaicin patches (Qutenza[®]) to be **eligible for coverage**** when the drug's respective patient selection criteria are met.

Qutenza

Patient Selection Criteria

Coverage eligibility will be considered for capsaicin patches (Qutenza) when one of the following patient selection criteria are met:

- Patient has a diagnosis of post-herpetic neuralgia; OR
- Patient has a diagnosis of diabetic peripheral neuropathy of the feet.

When Services Are Considered Investigational

Coverage is not available for investigational medical treatments or procedures, drugs, devices or biological products.

Based on review of available data, the Health Plan considers the use of capsaicin patches (Qutenza) when patient selection criteria are not met to be **investigational.***

Background/Overview

Qutenza is indicated for the relief of pain associated with post-herpetic neuralgia. Qutenza has an additional indication for the treatment of neuropathic pain associated with diabetic peripheral neuropathy of the feet. Qutenza also has some unsupported indications, such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) neuropathy.

Rationale/Source

This medical policy was developed through consideration of peer-reviewed medical literature generally recognized by the relevant medical community, U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval status, nationally accepted standards of medical practice and accepted standards of medical practice in this community, technology evaluation centers, reference to federal regulations, other plan medical policies, and accredited national guidelines.

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Qutenza has the potential to be used off label for certain conditions that do not have sufficient evidence to support usage. There is very little clinical evidence to support the use of Qutenza in conditions not listed in the above patient selection criteria.

The purpose of this policy is to limit the use of Qutenza to those uses mentioned in the patient selection criteria. Patient selection criteria are based on information collected in a review of the available data.

References

1. Qutenza [package insert]. Averitas Pharma. Morristown, New Jersey. Revised July 2024.
2. Bril V, England J, Franklin GM, et al. Evidence-based Guideline: Treatment of Painful Diabetic Neuropathy Report of the American Academy of Neurology, the American Association of Neuromuscular and Electrodiagnostic Medicine, and the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. *Neurology*. Epub ahead of print April 11, 2011.
3. Dworkin RH, O'Connor AB, Audette J, et al. Recommendations for the pharmacological management of neuropathic pain: an overview and literature update. *Mayo Clin Proc*. 2010;85:S3-S14.

Policy History

Original Effective Date: 08/01/2025

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05/20/2025 UM Committee review and approval. New policy.

Next Scheduled Review Date: 05/2026

Coding

The five character codes included in the Health Plan Medical Policy Coverage Guidelines are obtained from Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®)†, copyright 2024 by the American Medical Association (AMA). CPT is developed by the AMA as a listing of descriptive terms and five character identifying codes and modifiers for reporting medical services and procedures performed by physician.

The responsibility for the content of the Health Plan Medical Policy Coverage Guidelines is with the Health Plan and no endorsement by the AMA is intended or should be implied. The AMA disclaims responsibility for any consequences or liability attributable or related to any use, nonuse or interpretation of information contained in the Health Plan Medical Policy Coverage Guidelines. Fee schedules, relative value units, conversion factors and/or related components are not assigned by the AMA, are not part of CPT, and the AMA is not recommending their use. The AMA does not directly or indirectly practice medicine or dispense medical services. The AMA assumes no liability for data contained or not contained herein. Any use of CPT outside of the Health Plan Medical Policy Coverage Guidelines should refer to the most current Current Procedural Terminology which

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contains the complete and most current listing of CPT codes and descriptive terms. Applicable FARS/DFARS apply.

CPT is a registered trademark of the American Medical Association.

Codes used to identify services associated with this policy may include (but may not be limited to) the following:

Code Type	Code
CPT	No codes
HCPCS	J7336
ICD-10 Diagnosis	All related diagnoses

*Investigational – A medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product is Investigational if the effectiveness has not been clearly tested and it has not been incorporated into standard medical practice. Any determination we make that a medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product is Investigational will be based on a consideration of the following:

- A. Whether the medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product can be lawfully marketed without approval of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and whether such approval has been granted at the time the medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product is sought to be furnished; or
- B. Whether the medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product requires further studies or clinical trials to determine its maximum tolerated dose, toxicity, safety, effectiveness, or effectiveness as compared with the standard means of treatment or diagnosis, must improve health outcomes, according to the consensus of opinion among experts as shown by reliable evidence, including:
 1. Consultation with technology evaluation center(s);
 2. Credible scientific evidence published in peer-reviewed medical literature generally recognized by the relevant medical community; or
 3. Reference to federal regulations.

**Medically Necessary (or “Medical Necessity”) - Health care services, treatment, procedures, equipment, drugs, devices, items or supplies that a Provider, exercising prudent clinical judgment, would provide to a patient for the purpose of preventing, evaluating, diagnosing or treating an illness, injury, disease or its symptoms, and that are:

- A. In accordance with nationally accepted standards of medical practice;
- B. Clinically appropriate, in terms of type, frequency, extent, level of care, site and duration, and considered effective for the patient's illness, injury or disease; and
- C. Not primarily for the personal comfort or convenience of the patient, physician or other health care provider, and not more costly than an alternative service or sequence of services at least as likely to produce equivalent therapeutic or diagnostic results as to the diagnosis or treatment of that patient's illness, injury or disease.

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For these purposes, “nationally accepted standards of medical practice” means standards that are based on credible scientific evidence published in peer-reviewed medical literature generally recognized by the relevant medical community, Physician Specialty Society recommendations and the views of Physicians practicing in relevant clinical areas and any other relevant factors.

‡ Indicated trademarks are the registered trademarks of their respective owners.

NOTICE: If the Patient’s health insurance contract contains language that differs from the Health Plan Medical Policy definition noted above, the definition in the health insurance contract will be relied upon for specific coverage determinations.

NOTICE: Medical Policies are scientific based opinions, provided solely for coverage and informational purposes. Medical Policies should not be construed to suggest that the Health Plan recommends, advocates, requires, encourages, or discourages any particular treatment, procedure, or service, or any particular course of treatment, procedure, or service.

NOTICE: Federal and State law, as well as contract language, including definitions and specific contract provisions/exclusions, take precedence over Medical Policy and must be considered first in determining eligibility for coverage.

Medicare Advantage Members

Established coverage criteria for Medicare Advantage members can be found in Medicare coverage guidelines in statutes, regulations, National Coverage Determinations (NCD)s, and Local Coverage Determinations (LCD)s. To determine if a National or Local Coverage Determination addresses coverage for a specific service, refer to the Medicare Coverage Database at the following link: <https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/search.aspx>. You may wish to review the Guide to the MCD Search here: <https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/help/mcd-bene-help.aspx>.

When coverage criteria are not fully established in applicable Medicare statutes, regulations, NCDs or LCDs, internal coverage criteria may be developed. This policy is to serve as the summary of evidence, a list of resources and an explanation of the rationale that supports the adoption of this internal coverage criteria.