Clinical Policy: Epoetin Alfa (Epogen, Procrit), Epoetin Alfa-epbx (Retacrit)

Reference Number: CP.PHAR.237
Effective Date: 06.01.16
Last Review Date: 05.20
Line of Business: Commercial, HIM, Medicaid

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

Description
Epoetin alfa (Epogen®, Procrit®) and its biosimilar, epoetin alfa-epbx (Retacrit™), are erythropoiesis-stimulating agents (ESAs).

FDA Approved Indication(s)
Epogen, Procrit, and Retacrit are indicated for:

- Treatment of anemia due to:
  - Chronic kidney disease (CKD) in patients on dialysis and not on dialysis.
  - Zidovudine in patients with HIV-infection.
  - The effects of concomitant myelosuppressive chemotherapy, and upon initiation, there is a minimum of two additional months of planned chemotherapy.
- Reduction of allogeneic red blood cell (RBC) transfusions in patients undergoing elective, noncardiac, nonvascular surgery.

Limitation(s) of use:
- Epogen, Procrit, and Retacrit have not been shown to improve quality of life, fatigue, or patient well-being.
- Epogen, Procrit, and Retacrit are not indicated for use:
  - In patients with cancer receiving hormonal agents, biologic products, or radiotherapy, unless also receiving concomitant myelosuppressive chemotherapy.
  - In patients with cancer receiving myelosuppressive chemotherapy when the anticipated outcome is cure.
  - In patients with cancer receiving myelosuppressive chemotherapy in whom the anemia can be managed by transfusion.
  - In patients scheduled for surgery who are willing to donate autologous blood.
  - In patients undergoing cardiac or vascular surgery.
  - As a substitute for RBC transfusions in patients who require immediate correction of anemia.

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 health plans affiliated with Centene Corporation® that Epogen, Procrit, and Retacrit are medically necessary when the following criteria are met:
I. Initial Approval Criteria

A. Anemia due to Chronic Kidney Disease (must meet all):
   1. Diagnosis of anemia of CKD (dialysis and non-dialysis members);
   2. Prescribed by or in consultation with a hematologist or nephrologist;
   3. Adequate iron stores as indicated by current (within the last 3 months) serum ferritin level $\geq 100$ mcg/L or serum transferrin saturation $\geq 20$%;
   4. Pretreatment hemoglobin level $< 10$ g/dL;
   5. If Epogen or Procrit is requested, failure of Retacrit, unless contraindicated or clinically significant adverse effects are experienced.

   Approval duration:
   Medicaid/HIM – 6 months (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines)
   Commercial – 6 months or to member’s renewal period, whichever is longer (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines)

B. Anemia due to Zidovudine in HIV-infected Patients (must meet all):
   1. Diagnosis of zidovudine induced anemia;
   2. Prescribed by or in consultation with a hematologist or HIV specialist;
   3. Member is HIV-positive;
   4. Dose of zidovudine is $\leq 4,200$ mg/week;
   5. Endogenous serum erythropoietin levels $\leq 500$ mUnits/mL;
   6. Adequate iron stores as indicated by current (within the last 3 months) serum ferritin level $\geq 100$ mcg/L or serum transferrin saturation $\geq 20$%;
   7. Pretreatment hemoglobin level $< 10$ g/dL;
   8. If Epogen or Procrit is requested, failure of Retacrit, unless contraindicated or clinically significant adverse effects are experienced.

   Approval duration:
   Medicaid/HIM – 6 months (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines)
   Commercial – 6 months or to member’s renewal period, whichever is longer (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines)

C. Anemia due to Chemotherapy in Patients with Cancer (must meet all):
   1. Request is for use in solid or non-myeloid malignancies in members receiving myelosuppressive chemotherapy without curative intent;
   2. Prescribed by or in consultation with a hematologist or oncologist;
   3. Age $\geq 5$ years;
   4. Adequate iron stores as indicated by current (within the last 3 months) serum ferritin level $\geq 100$ mcg/L or serum transferrin saturation $\geq 20$%;
   5. Pretreatment hemoglobin $< 10$ g/dL;
   6. If Epogen or Procrit is requested, failure of Retacrit, unless contraindicated or clinically significant adverse effects are experienced.

   Approval duration:
   Medicaid/HIM – 6 months or until the completion of chemotherapy course (whichever is less) (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines)
   Commercial – Until the completion of chemotherapy course, 6 months, or to member’s renewal date, whichever is longer (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines)
D. Reduction of Allogeneic Red Blood Cell Transfusions in Patients Undergoing Elective, Noncardiac, Nonvascular Surgery (must meet all):
1. Member is at high risk for perioperative blood loss from elective, noncardiac, nonvascular surgery;
2. Perioperative hemoglobin > 10 to ≤ 13 g/dL;
3. Adequate iron stores as indicated by current (within the last 3 months) serum ferritin level ≥ 100 mcg/L or serum transferrin saturation ≥ 20%;
4. Member is unwilling or unable to donate autologous blood pre-operatively;
5. If Epogen or Procrit is requested, failure of Retacrit, unless contraindicated or clinically significant adverse effects are experienced;
6. Dose does not exceed one of the following (a or b):
   a. 300 Units/kg administered daily for a total of 15 doses (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines);
   b. 600 Units/kg for a total of 4 doses (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines).
Approval duration: 15 days (for 300 Units/kg daily) OR 21 days (for 600 Units/kg in 4 doses)

E. Anemia Associated with Myelodysplastic Syndromes (off-label) (must meet all):
1. Diagnosis of anemia from myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS);
2. Prescribed by or in consultation with a hematologist or oncologist;
3. Age ≥ 18 years;
4. Current (within the last 3 months) serum erythropoietin (EPO) ≤ 500 mU/mL;
5. Adequate iron stores as indicated by current (within the last 3 months) serum ferritin level ≥ 100 mcg/L or serum transferrin saturation ≥ 20%;
6. Pretreatment hemoglobin < 10 g/dL;
7. If Epogen or Procrit is requested, failure of Retacrit, unless contraindicated or clinically significant adverse effects are experienced.
Approval duration:
   Medicaid/HIM – 6 months (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines)
   Commercial – 6 months or to member’s renewal period, whichever is longer (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines)

F. Myelofibrosis-Associated Anemia (off-label) (must meet all):
1. Diagnosis of anemia associated with myelofibrosis;
2. Prescribed by or in consultation with a hematologist or oncologist;
3. Age ≥ 18 years;
4. Current (within the last 3 months) serum EPO < 500 mU/mL;
5. Adequate iron stores as indicated by current (within the last 3 months) serum ferritin level ≥ 100 mcg/L or serum transferrin saturation ≥ 20%;
6. If Epogen or Procrit is requested, failure of Retacrit, unless contraindicated or clinically significant adverse effects are experienced.
Approval duration:
   Medicaid/HIM – 6 months (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines)
   Commercial – 6 months or to member’s renewal period, whichever is longer (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines)
G. 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.PHAR.21 for health insurance marketplace and CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid.

II. Continued Therapy
A. Anemia due to Chronic Kidney Disease (must meet all):
   1. Currently receiving medication via Centene benefit or member has previously met all initial approval criteria;
   2. Member is responding positively to therapy;
   3. Adequate iron stores as indicated by current (within the last 3 months) serum ferritin level ≥ 100 mcg/L or serum transferrin saturation ≥ 20%.

    Approval Duration:
    Medicaid/HIM – 6 months (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines)
    Commercial – 6 months or to member’s renewal period, whichever is longer (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines)

B. Anemia due to Zidovudine in HIV-infected Patients (must meet all):
   1. Currently receiving medication via Centene benefit or member has previously met all initial approval criteria;
   2. Current hemoglobin level is ≤ 12 g/dL;
   3. Adequate iron stores as indicated by current (within the last 3 months) serum ferritin level ≥ 100 mcg/L or serum transferrin saturation ≥ 20%.

    Approval duration:
    Medicaid/HIM – 6 months (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines)
    Commercial – 6 months or to member’s renewal period, whichever is longer (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines)

C. Anemia due to Chemotherapy in Patients with Cancer (must meet all):
   1. Currently receiving medication via Centene benefit or member has previously met all initial approval criteria;
   2. Continuation of ESA therapy is concurrent with myelosuppressive chemotherapy;
   3. If member has received ≥ 8 weeks of ESA therapy, member meets both of the following (a and b):
      a. Documented response to therapy as evidenced by a rise in hemoglobin levels >1 g/dL;
      b. No RBC transfusions are required;
   4. Current hemoglobin < 10 g/dL;
   5. Adequate iron stores as indicated by current (within the last 3 months) serum ferritin level ≥ 100 mcg/L or serum transferrin saturation ≥ 20%.

    Approval duration:
    Medicaid/HIM – 6 months or until the completion of chemotherapy course (whichever is less) (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines)
    Commercial – Until the completion of chemotherapy course, 6 months, or to member’s renewal date, whichever is longer (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines)
D. Reduction of Allogeneic Red Blood Cell Transfusions in Patients Undergoing Elective, Noncardiac, Nonvascular Surgery
   1. Re-authorization is not permitted. Members must meet the initial approval criteria.
   Approval duration: Not applicable

E. Anemia Associated with Myelodysplastic Syndrome (off-label) (must meet all):
   1. Currently receiving medication via Centene benefit or member has previously met all initial approval criteria;
   2. Member is responding positively to therapy;
   3. Current hemoglobin ≤ 12 g/dL;
   4. Adequate iron stores as indicated by current (within the last 3 months) serum ferritin level ≥ 100 mcg/L or serum transferrin saturation ≥ 20%.
   Approval duration:
   Medicaid/HIM – 6 months (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines)
   Commercial – 6 months or to member’s renewal period, whichever is longer (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines)

F. Myelofibrosis-Associated Anemia (off-label) (must meet all):
   1. Currently receiving medication via Centene benefit or member has previously met initial approval criteria;
   2. Member is responding positively to therapy;
   3. Adequate iron stores as indicated by current (within the last 3 months) serum ferritin level ≥ 100 mcg/L or serum transferrin saturation ≥ 20%.
   Approval duration:
   Medicaid/HIM – 6 months (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines)
   Commercial – 6 months or to member’s renewal period, whichever is longer (see Appendix D for dose rounding guidelines)

G. 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 6 months (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.PHAR.21 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.PHAR.21 for health insurance marketplace and CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid or evidence of coverage documents.

IV. Appendices/General Information
   Appendix A: Abbreviation/Acronym Key
Appendix B: Therapeutic Alternatives
Not applicable

Appendix C: Contraindications/Boxed Warnings

- Contraindication(s):
  - Uncontrolled hypertension
  - Pure red cell aplasia (PRCA) that begins after treatment with erythropoietin protein drugs
  - Allergic reactions
  - Epogen/Procrit - Use of the multiple-dose vials containing benzyl alcohol in neonates, infants, pregnant women, and lactating women

- Boxed warning(s): ESAs increase the risk of death, myocardial infarction, stroke, venous thromboembolism, thrombosis of vascular access and tumor progression or recurrence

Appendix D: Dose Rounding Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight-based Dose Range</th>
<th>Vial Quantity Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤ 2,099.99 units</td>
<td>1 vial of 2,000 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>2,100 units-3,149.99 units</td>
<td>1 vial of 3,000 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,150 units-4,199.99 units</td>
<td>1 vial of 4,000 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,200 units-6,299.99 units</td>
<td>1 vial of 4,000 units and 1 vial of 2,000 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>6,300 units-7,349.99 units</td>
<td>1 vial of 4,000 units and 1 vial of 3,000 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>7,350 units-8,399.99 units</td>
<td>2 vials of 4,000 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>8,400 units-10,499 units</td>
<td>1 vial of 10,000 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>10,500 units-12,599.99 units</td>
<td>1 vial of 2,000 units and 1 vial of 10,000 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>12,600 units-13,649.99 units</td>
<td>1 vial of 3,000 units and 1 vial of 10,000 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>13,650 units-14,699.99 units</td>
<td>1 vial of 4,000 units and 1 vial of 10,000 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>14,700 units-16,799.99 units</td>
<td>1 vial of 2,000 units, 1 vial of 4,000 units and 1 vial of 10,000 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>16,800 units-17,849.99 units</td>
<td>1 vial of 3,000 units, 1 vial of 4,000 units and 1 vial of 10,000 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>17,849 units-18,899.99 units</td>
<td>2 vials of 4,000 units and 1 vial of 10,000 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>18,900 units-20,999 units</td>
<td>2 vials of 10,000 units</td>
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</tbody>
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V. Dosage and Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indication</th>
<th>Dosing Regimen</th>
<th>Maximum Dose</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anemia due to CKD</td>
<td>Initial dose: 50 to 100 Units/kg 3 times weekly (adults) IV or SC and 50 Units/kg 3 times weekly (children on dialysis) IV or SC. Individualize maintenance dose. IV route recommended for patients on hemodialysis</td>
<td>Varies depending on indication and frequency of administration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Indication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug Name</th>
<th>Availability</th>
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| Epoetin alfa (Epogen)      | • Single-dose vial: 2,000 units/mL, 3,000 units/mL, 4,000 units/mL, and 10,000 units/mL  
|                            | • Multiple-dose vial containing benzyl alcohol: 20,000 units/2 mL and 20,000 units/mL |
| Epoetin alfa (Procrit)     | • Single-dose vial: 2,000 units/mL, 3,000 units/mL, 4,000 units/mL, and 10,000 units/mL  
|                            | • Multiple-dose vial containing benzyl alcohol: 20,000 units/2 mL and 20,000 units/mL |
| Epoetin alfa-epbx (Retacrit) | • Single-dose vial: 2,000 units/mL, 3,000 units/mL, 4,000 units/mL, and 10,000 units/mL  
|                            | • Multiple-dose vial containing benzyl alcohol: 20,000 units/2 mL and 20,000 units/mL |

### VI. Product Availability

### VII. References


Coding Implications

Codes referenced in this clinical policy are for informational purposes only. Inclusion or exclusion of any codes does not guarantee coverage. Providers should reference the most up-to-date sources of professional coding guidance prior to the submission of claims for reimbursement of covered services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HCPCS Codes</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q4081</td>
<td>Injection, epoetin alfa, 100 units (for ESRD on dialysis)</td>
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<tr>
<td>J0885</td>
<td>Injection, epoetin alfa, (for non-ESRD use), 1000 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q5105</td>
<td>Injection, epoetin alfa, biosimilar, (Retacrit) (for ESRD on dialysis), 100 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q5106</td>
<td>Injection, epoetin alfa, biosimilar, (Retacrit) (for non-ESRD use), 1000 units</td>
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Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>P&amp;T Approval Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy split from CP.PHAR.10.</td>
<td>05.16</td>
<td>06.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criteria: added contraindications of serious allergic reaction to Procrit/Epogen and use of the multi-dose vials in neonates, infants, pregnant women, and nursing mothers; added adequate iron stores requirement to criteria for allogeneic blood transfusion in surgery patients and anemia due to: chemo, zidovudine,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>P&amp;T Approval Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDS, and HCV treatment; removed ESA APPRISE Oncology Program requirement from chemo criteria;</td>
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<tr>
<td>added duration of ribavirin treatment (whichever is less) to initial approval duration for HCV</td>
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<tr>
<td>treatment; removed negative del (5q) requirement from MDS criteria. Re-auth: added iron stores</td>
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<td>and reasons to discontinue requirements; Anemia of CKD: removed Hgb dose adjustments but kept</td>
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<tr>
<td>upper limit Hgb for patients on and not on dialysis; Zidovudine-induced anemia: simplified</td>
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<tr>
<td>specified Hgb levels to Hgb ≤ 12g/dL; Anemia due to chemo: added current Hgb &lt; 10g/dL per CMS</td>
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<tr>
<td>policy; Anemia due to MDS or HCV: removed questions relating to specific Hgb levels but kept</td>
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<tr>
<td>current Hgb ≤ 12g/dL. References updated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Removed requirement related to prior trial and failure of Epogen (for Procrit request).</td>
<td>09.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial and re-auth: indicated that iron lab should be current (within the last 3 months).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial: anemia due to chemo-added requirement that anemia cannot be managed by transfusion;</td>
<td>05.17</td>
<td>06.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>added NCCN recommended use (myelofibrosis-associated anemia); re-auth: anemia due to</td>
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<tr>
<td>zidovudine -added approval duration; updated limitations of use. For off-label uses, added</td>
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<tr>
<td>that member must have adequate iron stores. Added Appendix B Dosage and Administration.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2Q 2018 annual review: HIM added; removed subjective criteria across all indications since</td>
<td>02.06.18</td>
<td>05.18</td>
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<tr>
<td>specialist requirement is added; added age where relevant approval duration modified to allow</td>
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<tr>
<td>no less than 6 months for initial/continued approval; clarified that the lab for serum EPO</td>
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<tr>
<td>should be current (within the past 3 months) for MDS; added requirement for positive response</td>
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<tr>
<td>to therapy on re-auth; added criteria for MF-associated anemia; references reviewed and updated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Added Retacrit to criteria; removed myelofibrosis-associated anemia, anemia due to</td>
<td>06.26.18</td>
<td>02.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>myelodysplastic syndrome, anemia secondary to combination ribavirin and interferon-alfa therapy</td>
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<tr>
<td>in patients infected with hepatitis C virus off label uses since DrugDex IIb not covered;</td>
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<tr>
<td>references reviewed and updated.</td>
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<td>2Q 2019 annual review: added NCCN compendium supported uses for myelofibrosis-associated</td>
<td>01.30.19</td>
<td>05.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>anemia and anemia due to myelodysplastic syndrome; references reviewed and updated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Added Commercial line of business; retire CP.CPA.321; for Epogen and Procrit, added</td>
<td>10.01.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>redirection to Retacrit per existing clinical guidance and SDC recommendation; removed</td>
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<tr>
<td>reference to HIM.PA.103 for Retacrit requests.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2Q 2020 annual review: for anemia with chemotherapy, modified diagnosis requirement to confirm</td>
<td>02.13.20</td>
<td>05.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>request is for use in solid or non-myeloid malignancies in members receiving myelosuppressive</td>
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<tr>
<td>chemotherapy without curative intent consistent with NCCN and</td>
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CLINICAL POLICY
Epoetin Alfa, Epoetin Alfa-epbx

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<tr>
<td>ASCO recommendations; added appendix D: dose rounding guidelines; added reference to appendix D within criteria; references reviewed and updated.</td>
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</table>

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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