PRIOR AUTHORIZATION POLICY

POLICY: Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis and Related Lung Disease – Pirfenidone Prior Authorization Policy
- Esbriet® (pirfenidone capsules and film-coated tablets – Genentech, generic)

REVIEW DATE: 07/16/2025

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

THE FOLLOWING COVERAGE POLICY APPLIES TO HEALTH BENEFIT PLANS ADMINISTERED BY CIGNA COMPANIES. CERTAIN CIGNA COMPANIES AND/OR LINES OF BUSINESS ONLY PROVIDE UTILIZATION REVIEW SERVICES TO CLIENTS AND DO NOT MAKE COVERAGE DETERMINATIONS. REFERENCES TO STANDARD BENEFIT PLAN LANGUAGE AND COVERAGE DETERMINATIONS DO NOT APPLY TO THOSE CLIENTS. COVERAGE POLICIES ARE INTENDED TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE IN INTERPRETING CERTAIN STANDARD BENEFIT PLANS ADMINISTERED BY CIGNA COMPANIES. PLEASE NOTE, THE TERMS OF A CUSTOMER'S PARTICULAR BENEFIT PLAN DOCUMENT [GROUP SERVICE AGREEMENT, EVIDENCE OF COVERAGE, CERTIFICATE OF COVERAGE, SUMMARY PLAN DESCRIPTION (SPD) OR SIMILAR PLAN DOCUMENT] MAY DIFFER SIGNIFICANTLY FROM THE STANDARD BENEFIT PLANS UPON WHICH THESE COVERAGE POLICIES ARE BASED. FOR EXAMPLE, A CUSTOMER'S BENEFIT PLAN DOCUMENT MAY CONTAIN A SPECIFIC EXCLUSION RELATED TO A TOPIC ADDRESSED IN A COVERAGE POLICY. IN THE EVENT OF A CONFLICT, A CUSTOMER'S BENEFIT PLAN DOCUMENT ALWAYS SUPERSEDES THE INFORMATION IN THE COVERAGE POLICIES. IN THE ABSENCE OF A CONTROLLING FEDERAL OR STATE COVERAGE MANDATE, BENEFITS ARE ULTIMATELY DETERMINED BY THE TERMS OF THE APPLICABLE BENEFIT PLAN DOCUMENT. COVERAGE DETERMINATIONS IN EACH SPECIFIC INSTANCE REQUIRE CONSIDERATION OF 1) THE TERMS OF THE APPLICABLE BENEFIT PLAN DOCUMENT IN EFFECT ON THE DATE OF SERVICE; 2) ANY APPLICABLE LAWS/REGULATIONS; 3) ANY RELEVANT COLLATERAL SOURCE MATERIALS INCLUDING COVERAGE POLICIES AND; 4) THE SPECIFIC FACTS OF THE PARTICULAR SITUATION. EACH COVERAGE REQUEST SHOULD BE REVIEWED ON ITS OWN MERITS. MEDICAL DIRECTORS ARE EXPECTED TO EXERCISE CLINICAL JUDGMENT WHERE APPROPRIATE AND HAVE DISCRETION IN MAKING INDIVIDUAL COVERAGE DETERMINATIONS. WHERE COVERAGE FOR CARE OR SERVICES DOES NOT DEPEND ON SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES, REIMBURSEMENT WILL ONLY BE PROVIDED IF A REQUESTED SERVICE(S) IS SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RELEVANT CRITERIA OUTLINED IN THE APPLICABLE COVERAGE POLICY, INCLUDING COVERED DIAGNOSIS AND/OR PROCEDURE CODE(S). REIMBURSEMENT IS NOT ALLOWED FOR SERVICES WHEN BILLED FOR CONDITIONS OR DIAGNOSES THAT ARE NOT COVERED UNDER THIS COVERAGE POLICY (SEE "CODING INFORMATION" BELOW). WHEN BILLING, PROVIDERS MUST USE THE MOST APPROPRIATE CODES AS OF THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE SUBMISSION. CLAIMS SUBMITTED FOR SERVICES THAT ARE NOT ACCOMPANIED BY COVERED CODE(S) UNDER THE APPLICABLE COVERAGE POLICY WILL BE DENIED AS NOT COVERED. COVERAGE POLICIES RELATE EXCLUSIVELY TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF HEALTH BENEFIT PLANS. COVERAGE POLICIES ARE NOT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TREATMENT AND SHOULD NEVER BE USED AS TREATMENT GUIDELINES. IN CERTAIN MARKETS, DELEGATED VENDOR GUIDELINES MAY BE USED TO SUPPORT MEDICAL NECESSITY AND OTHER COVERAGE DETERMINATIONS.

CIGNA NATIONAL FORMULARY COVERAGE:

OVERVIEW

Pirfenidone, a pyridone, is indicated for the treatment of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF).[1]

The safety and effectiveness of pirfenidone in pediatric patients have not been established.

Disease Overview

IPF is a form of chronic interstitial lung pneumonia associated with histologic pattern of usual interstitial pneumonia (UIP).[2] The condition is specific for patients that have clinical features and the histologic pattern of UIP or a classical high-resolution computed tomography scan for IPF. In this lung condition there is cellular proliferation, interstitial inflammation, fibrosis, or the combination of these findings,

within the alveolar wall that is not due to infection or cancer.[3] IPF is rather rare and the prevalence in the US ranges from 10 to 60 cases per 100,000. However, in one study, the prevalence was 494 cases per 100,000 in 2011 in adults > 65 years of age, which is higher than previous information. The disease mainly impacts older adults.[2] Symptoms include a progressive dry cough and exertional dyspnea. Patients experience a high disease burden with hospital admissions. The clinical course varies among patients but the mean survival after symptom onset is usually 3 to 5 years. The cause is unknown but environmental and occupational hazards may play a role, as well as a history of smoking. Medical therapy is only modestly effective and mainly shows the rate of disease progression. Agents FDA-approved for IPF are Ofev® (nintedanib capsules) and pirfenidone. Lung transplantation is a therapeutic option.

Clinical Efficacy

The efficacy of pirfenidone was assessed in patients with IPF in three Phase III, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, multicenter, multinational trials (n = 1,247).[1,4,5] Patients were required to have a percent predicted forced vital capacity (%FVC) ≥ 50% at baseline. Pirfenidone 2,403 mg/day led to a statistically significant change in the %FVC at 52 weeks and 72 weeks, respectively. Also, a reduction in the mean decline in forced vital capacity (in mL) was observed in both studies for patients receiving pirfenidone 2,403 mg/day compared with placebo.[1-3] Some information suggests that patients who have %FVC < 50% may also have some benefits from therapy.[6-9]

Guidelines

In 2015, the clinical practice guideline from the American Thoracic Society (ATS), European Respiratory Society (ERS), the Japanese Respiratory Society (JRS), and Latin American Thoracic Association (ALAT) on the treatment of IPF was updated.[10] Regarding pirfenidone, the guideline suggests use of this medication (conditional recommendation, moderate confidence in estimates of effect). The guideline notes that the data with pirfenidone cannot be generalized to patients with IPF who have more severe impairment of pulmonary function tests or for patients with other significant comorbidities.[10] Updated recommendations by this group in 2022 support use of pirfenidone in patients with IPF.[11]

POLICY STATEMENT

Prior Authorization is recommended for prescription benefit coverage of pirfenidone. All approvals are provided for the duration noted below. Because of the specialized skills required for evaluation and diagnosis of patients treated with pirfenidone, approval requires pirfenidone to be prescribed by or in consultation with a physician who specializes in the condition being treated.

- **Esbriet® (pirfenidone capsules and film-coated tablets - Genentech, generic)**

is(are) covered as medically necessary when the following criteria is(are) met for FDA-approved indication(s) or other uses with supportive evidence (if applicable):

FDA-Approved Indication

1. **Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis.** Approve for 1 year if the patient meets ONE of the following (A or B):
   - **A)** Initial Therapy. Approve if the patient meets ALL of the following (i, ii, iii, and iv):
     - **i.** Patient is ≥ 18 years of age; AND
     - **ii.** Forced vital capacity is ≥ 40% of the predicted value; AND
     - **iii.** Diagnosis of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis is confirmed by ONE of the following (a or b):
       - **a)** Findings on high-resolution computed tomography indicate usual interstitial pneumonia; OR
       - **b)** A surgical lung biopsy demonstrates usual interstitial pneumonia; AND
     - **iv.** Medication is prescribed by or in consultation with a pulmonologist; OR
   - **B)** Patient is Currently Receiving Pirfenidone. Approve if the patient meets ALL of the following (i, ii, and iii):
     - **i.** Patient is ≥ 18 years of age; AND
     - **ii.** Patient has experienced a beneficial response to therapy over the last year while receiving pirfenidone; AND
       Note: For a patient who has received less than 1 year of therapy, response is from baseline prior to initiating pirfenidone. Examples of a beneficial response include a reduction in the anticipated decline in forced vital capacity, six-minute walk distance, and/or a reduction in the number or severity of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis exacerbations.
     - **iii.** Medication is prescribed by or in consultation with a pulmonologist.

CONDITIONS NOT COVERED

- **Esbriet® (pirfenidone capsules and film-coated tablets - Genentech, generic)**

is(are) considered not medically necessary for ANY other use(s) including the following (this list may not be all inclusive; criteria will be updated as new published data are available):

1. **Pirfenidone is Being Used Concomitantly with Ofev (nintedanib capsules)**. Ofev is another medication indicated for the treatment of IPF. The effectiveness and safety of concomitant use of pirfenidone with Ofev have not been established. The 2015 ATS/ERS/JRS/ALAT clinical practice guideline regarding the treatment of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (an update of the 2011 clinical practice guideline) does not recommend taking Ofev and pirfenidone in

combination.[10] A small exploratory study was done in which patients with IPF receiving Ofev added on pirfenidone.[12] Further research is needed to determine the utility of this combination regimen.

REFERENCES

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12. Vancheri C, Kreuter M, Richeldi L, et al, INJOURNEY trial investigators. Nintedanib with add-on pirfenidone in idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis: results of the INJOURNEY trial. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med*. 2018;197(3):356-363.

HISTORY

Type of Revision	Summary of Changes	Review Date
Annual Revision	No criteria changes.	06/28/2023
Annual Revision	No criteria changes.	07/10/2024
Annual Revision	No criteria changes.	07/16/2025