

## **Clinical Policy: Benralizumab (Fasenra)**

Reference Number: CP.PHAR.373

Effective Date: 06.01.18

Last Review Date: 02.21

Line of Business: Commercial, HIM, Medicaid

[Coding Implications](#)

[Revision Log](#)

See [Important Reminder](#) at the end of this policy for important regulatory and legal information.

### **Description**

Benralizumab (Fasenra<sup>™</sup>) is an interleukin-5 receptor alpha-directed cytolytic monoclonal antibody (IgG1 kappa).

### **FDA Approved Indication(s)**

Fasenra is indicated for the add-on maintenance treatment of patients with severe asthma aged 12 years and older, and with an eosinophilic phenotype.

Limitation(s) of use:

- Fasenra is not indicated for treatment of other eosinophilic conditions.
- Fasenra is not indicated for the relief of acute bronchospasm or status asthmaticus.

### **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<sup>®</sup> that Fasenra is **medically necessary** when the following criteria are met:

#### **I. Initial Approval Criteria**

##### **A. Severe Asthma (must meet all):**

1. Diagnosis of asthma;
2. Member has an absolute blood eosinophil count  $\geq 150$  cells/mcL within the past 3 months;
3. Prescribed by or in consultation with a pulmonologist, immunologist, or allergist;
4. Age  $\geq 12$  years;
5. Member has experienced  $\geq 2$  exacerbations within the last 12 months, requiring any of the following despite adherent use of controller therapy (i.e., medium- to high-dose inhaled corticosteroid [ICS] plus either a long-acting beta<sub>2</sub> agonist [LABA] or leukotriene modifier [LTRA] if LABA contraindication/intolerance):
  - a. Oral/systemic corticosteroid treatment (or increase in dose if already on oral corticosteroid);
  - b. Urgent care visit or hospital admission;
  - c. Intubation;
6. Fasenra is prescribed concurrently with an ICS plus either a LABA or LTRA;
7. Fasenra is not prescribed concurrently with Cinqair<sup>®</sup>, Nucala<sup>®</sup>, Dupixent<sup>®</sup>, or Xolair<sup>®</sup>;

8. Dose does not exceed 30 mg every 4 weeks for the first 3 doses, then 30 mg every 8 weeks thereafter.

**Approval duration: 6 months**

**B. 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.PA.154 for health insurance marketplace, and CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid.

**II. Continued Therapy**

**A. Severe Asthma (must meet all):**

1. Currently receiving medication via Centene benefit or member has previously met initial approval criteria;
2. Demonstrated adherence to asthma controller therapy that includes an ICS plus either a LABA or LTRA;
3. Member is responding positively to therapy (examples may include but are not limited to: reduction in exacerbations or corticosteroid dose, improvement in forced expiratory volume over one second since baseline, reduction in the use of rescue therapy);
4. Fasenra is not prescribed concurrently with Cinqair, Nucala, Dupixent, or Xolair;
5. If request is for a dose increase, new dose does not exceed 30 mg every 8 weeks.

**Approval duration:**

**Medicaid/HIM** – 12 months

**Commercial** – 6 months or member’s renewal period, whichever is longer

**B. 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.PA.154 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.PA.154 for health insurance marketplace, and CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid, or evidence of coverage documents;

- B.** Acute bronchospasm or status asthmaticus.

**IV. Appendices/General Information**

*Appendix A: Abbreviation/Acronym Key*

FDA: Food and Drug Administration

BEC: blood eosinophil count

GINA: Global Initiative for Asthma

ICS: inhaled corticosteroid

LABA: long-acting beta<sub>2</sub> agonist

LTRA: leukotriene modifier

*Appendix B: Therapeutic Alternatives*

*This table provides a listing of preferred alternative therapy recommended in the approval criteria. The drugs listed here may not be a formulary agent and may require prior authorization.*

<b>Drug Name</b>	<b>Dosing Regimen</b>	<b>Dose Limit/ Maximum Dose</b>
<b>ICS (medium – high dose)</b>		
Qvar <sup>®</sup> (beclomethasone)	> 200 mcg/day 40 mcg, 80 mcg per actuation 1-4 actuations BID	4 actuations BID
budesonide (Pulmicort <sup>®</sup> )	> 400 mcg/day 90 mcg, 180 mcg per actuation 2-4 actuations BID	2 actuations BID
Alvesco <sup>®</sup> (ciclesonide)	> 160 mcg/day 80 mcg, 160 mcg per actuation 1-2 actuations BID	2 actuations BID
Aerospan <sup>®</sup> (flunisolide)	> 320 mcg/day 80 mcg per actuation 2-4 actuations BID	2 actuations BID
Flovent <sup>®</sup> (fluticasone propionate)	> 250 mcg/day 44-250 mcg per actuation 2-4 actuations BID	2 actuations BID
Arnuity Ellipta <sup>®</sup> (fluticasone furoate)	200 mcg/day 100 mcg, 200 mcg per actuation 1 actuation QD	1 actuation QD
Asmanex <sup>®</sup> (mometasone)	>220 mcg/day HFA: 100 mcg, 200 mcg per actuation Twisthaler: 110 mcg, 220 mcg per actuation 1-2 actuations QD to BID	2 inhalations BID
<b>LABA</b>		
Serevent <sup>®</sup> (salmeterol)	50 mcg per dose 1 inhalation BID	1 inhalation BID
<b>Combination products (ICS + LABA)</b>		
Dulera <sup>®</sup> (mometasone/formoterol)	100/5 mcg, 200/5 mcg per actuation 2 actuations BID	4 actuations per day
Breo Ellipta <sup>®</sup> (fluticasone/vilanterol)	100/25 mcg, 200/25 mcg per actuation 1 actuation QD	1 actuation QD
Advair <sup>®</sup> (fluticasone/salmeterol)	Diskus: 100/50 mcg, 250/50 mcg, 500/50 mcg per actuation HFA: 45/21 mcg, 115/21 mcg, 230/21 mcg per actuation 1 actuation BID	1 actuation BID

Drug Name	Dosing Regimen	Dose Limit/ Maximum Dose
fluticasone/salmeterol (Airduo RespiClick®)	55/13 mcg, 113/14 mcg, 232/14 mcg per actuation 1 actuation BID	1 actuation BID
Symbicort® (budesonide/formoterol)	80 mcg/4.5 mcg, 160 mcg/4.5 mcg per actuation 2 actuations BID	2 actuations BID
<b>LTRA</b>		
montelukast (Singulair®)	4 to 10 mg PO QD	10 mg per day
zafirlukast (Accolate®)	10 to 20 mg PO BID	40 mg per day
zileuton ER (Zyflo® CR)	1,200 mg PO BID	2,400 mg per day
Zyflo® (zileuton)	600 mg PO QID	2,400 mg per day
<b>Oral corticosteroids</b>		
dexamethasone (Decadron®)	0.75 to 9 mg/day PO in 2 to 4 divided doses	Varies
methylprednisolone (Medrol®)	40 to 80 mg PO in 1 to 2 divided doses	Varies
prednisolone (Millipred®, Orapred ODT®)	40 to 80 mg PO in 1 to 2 divided doses	Varies
prednisone (Deltasone®)	40 to 80 mg PO in 1 to 2 divided doses	Varies

*Therapeutic alternatives are listed as Brand name® (generic) when the drug is available by brand name only and generic (Brand name®) when the drug is available by both brand and generic.*

*Appendix C: Contraindications/Boxed Warnings*

- Contraindication(s): hypersensitivity
- Boxed warning(s): none reported

*Appendix D: General Information*

- The pivotal trials defined severe asthma as 2 or more exacerbations of asthma despite regular use of high-dose ICS plus an additional controller (e.g., LABA or LTRA) with or without oral corticosteroids. Although the CALIMA trial included patients receiving medium-dose ICS, Fasenna was not shown to have an effect on annual exacerbation rate, pre-bronchodilator forced expiratory volume in 1 second, or total asthma symptom score in those patients.
- Clinically significant exacerbation was defined as a worsening of asthma (any new or increased symptoms or signs that were concerning) that led to one of the following: (1) use of systemic corticosteroids, (2) emergency department or visit to urgent care center, or (3) inpatient hospital stay.
- Baseline blood eosinophil count (BEC) is a predictor of response to therapy. Although the SIROCCO and CALIMA trials were powered for efficacy analysis in patients with baseline BEC  $\geq 300$  cells/ $\mu$ L, a pooled analysis which stratified patients by baseline BEC ( $\geq 0$  cells/ $\mu$ L,  $\geq 150$  cells/ $\mu$ L,  $\geq 300$  cells/ $\mu$ L, and  $\geq 450$  cells/ $\mu$ L) found Fasenna to have a statistically significant positive treatment effect on those with baseline BEC  $\geq 150$

cells/ $\mu$ L. In addition, the ZONDA trial found Fasentra to significantly reduce oral corticosteroid dose in patients with baseline BEC  $\geq$  150 cells/ $\mu$ L.

- The 2019 Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) guidelines for difficult-to-treat and severe asthma recommend Fasentra be considered as adjunct therapy for patients 12 years of age and older with exacerbations or poor symptom control despite taking at least high dose ICS/LABA and who have allergic or eosinophilic biomarkers or need maintenance oral corticosteroids. Per 2020 GINA guidelines, Fasentra may also be considered if the patient is uncontrolled on Step 4 treatment (medium dose ICS/LABA).
- Patients could potentially meet asthma criteria for both Xolair and Fasentra, though there is insufficient data to support the combination use of multiple asthma biologics. The combination has not been studied. Approximately 30% of patients in the Nucala MENSA study also were candidates for therapy with Xolair.
- Lab results for blood eosinophil counts can be converted into cells/mcL using the following unit conversion calculator: <https://www.fasentrahcp.com/m/fasentra-eosinophil-calculator.html>.

#### V. Dosage and Administration

Indication	Dosing Regimen	Maximum Dose
Severe asthma	30 mg SC every 4 weeks for the first 3 doses, followed by once every 8 weeks thereafter	See regimen

#### VI. Product Availability

- Single-dose prefilled syringe with solution for injection: 30 mg/mL
- Single-dose autoinjector Fasentra Pen with solution for injection: 30 mg/mL

#### VII. References

1. Fasentra Prescribing Information. Wilmington, DE: AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals LP; October 2019. Available at: [www.fasentra.com](http://www.fasentra.com). Accessed October 26, 2020.
2. National Asthma Education and Prevention Program: Expert panel report III: Guidelines for the diagnosis and management of asthma. Bethesda, MD: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, 2007. (NIH publication no. 08-4051). Available at <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-pro/guidelines/current/asthma-guidelines>. Accessed October 23, 2020.
3. Clinical Pharmacology [database online]. Tampa, FL: Gold Standard, Inc.; 2019. Available at: <http://www.clinicalpharmacology.com>. Accessed November 7, 2019.
4. Global Initiative for Asthma. Global strategy for asthma management and prevention, 2020. Available at: [www.ginasthma.org](http://www.ginasthma.org). Published 2020. Accessed October 23, 2020.
5. Global Initiative for Asthma. Difficult-to-treat and severe asthma in adolescent and adult patients – diagnosis and management, v2.0 April 2019. Available at: [www.ginasthma.org](http://www.ginasthma.org). Published April 2019. Accessed October 23, 2020.

#### 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.

HCPCS Codes	Description
J0517	Injection, benralizumab, 1 mg

Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals	Date	P&T Approval Date
Policy created	01.16.18	05.18
1Q 2019 annual review: modified ICS requirement to include medium dose ICS per GINA 2018 recommendations; added option for immunologist prescribing; link to blood eosinophil unit conversion calculator added to Appendix D; references reviewed and updated.	10.11.18	02.19
Added HIM-Medical Benefit line of business.	05.22.19	
1Q 2020 annual review: revised HIM-Medical Benefit to HIM line of business; added requirement that Fasenra is not prescribed concurrently with other biologic therapies for asthma; added new autoinjector formulation; references reviewed and updated.	11.07.19	02.20
1Q 2021 annual review: no significant changes; references to HIM.PHAR.21 revised to HIM.PA.154; HCPCS code updated; references reviewed and updated.	10.26.20	02.21

**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.

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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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