

Clinical Policy: Guselkumab (Tremfya)

Reference Number: CP.PHAR.364

Effective Date: 08.29.17

Last Review Date: 05.22

Line of Business: Medicaid

[Revision Log](#)

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

Description

Guselkumab (Tremfya[®]) is an interleukin-23 (IL-23) blocker.

FDA Approved Indication(s)

Tremfya is indicated for the treatment of:

- Adult patients with moderate-to-severe plaque psoriasis (PsO) who are candidates for systemic therapy or phototherapy
- Adult patients with active psoriatic arthritis (PsA)

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 Tremfya is **medically necessary** when the following criteria are met:

I. Initial Approval Criteria**A. Plaque Psoriasis** (must meet all):

1. Diagnosis of moderate-to-severe PsO as evidenced by involvement of one of the following (a or b):
 - a. $\geq 3\%$ of total body surface area;
 - b. Hands, feet, scalp, face, or genital area;
2. Prescribed by or in consultation with a dermatologist or rheumatologist;
3. Age ≥ 18 years;
4. Member meets one of the following (a, b, or c):
 - a. Failure of a ≥ 3 consecutive month trial of methotrexate (MTX) at up to maximally indicated doses;
 - b. Member has intolerance or contraindication to MTX (*see Appendix D*), and failure of a ≥ 3 consecutive month trial of cyclosporine or acitretin at up to maximally indicated doses, unless clinically significant adverse effects are experienced or both are contraindicated;
 - c. Member has intolerance or contraindication to MTX, cyclosporine, and acitretin, and failure of phototherapy, unless contraindicated or clinically significant adverse effects are experienced;
5. Failure of a ≥ 3 consecutive month trial of Taltz[®], unless contraindicated or clinically significant adverse effects are experienced;

**Prior authorization may be required for Taltz*

6. Member does not have combination use with biological disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs or Janus kinase inhibitors (*see Section III: Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is NOT authorized*);
7. Dose does not exceed 100 mg at weeks 0 and 4, followed by maintenance dose of 100 mg every 8 weeks.

Approval duration: 6 months

B. Psoriatic Arthritis (must meet all):

1. Diagnosis of PsA;
2. Prescribed by or in consultation with a dermatologist or rheumatologist;
3. Age $\geq$ 18 years;
4. Failure of ALL of the following*, each used for $\geq$ 3 consecutive months, unless clinically significant adverse effects are experienced or all are contraindicated (a and b):
 - a. Enbrel[®], Otezla[®], and Taltz[®];
 - b. If member has not responded or is intolerant to one or more TNF blockers, Xeljanz[®]/Xeljanz XR[®], unless member has cardiovascular risk and benefits do not outweigh the risk of treatment;

**Prior authorization may be required for Enbrel, Otezla, Taltz, Xeljanz/Xeljanz XR*

5. Member does not have combination use with biological disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs or Janus kinase inhibitors (*see Section III: Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is NOT authorized*);
6. Dose does not exceed 100 mg at weeks 0 and 4, followed by maintenance dose of 100 mg every 8 weeks.

Approval duration: 6 months

C. 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.PMN.53 for Medicaid.

II. Continued Therapy

A. All Indications in Section I (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. Member does not have combination use with biological disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs or Janus kinase inhibitors (*see Section III: Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is NOT authorized*);
4. If request is for a dose increase, new dose does not exceed 100 mg every 8 weeks.

Approval duration: 12 months

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.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 policy – CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid or evidence of coverage documents;
- B. Combination use with biological disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (bDMARDs) or potent immunosuppressants, including but not limited to any tumor necrosis factor (TNF) antagonists [e.g., Cimzia[®], Enbrel[®], Humira[®], Simponi[®], Avsola[™], Inflectra[™], Remicade[®], Renflexis[™]], interleukin agents [e.g., Arcalyst[®] (IL-1 blocker), Ilaris[®] (IL-1 blocker), Kineret[®] (IL-1RA), Actemra[®] (IL-6RA), Kevzara[®] (IL-6RA), Stelara[®] (IL-12/23 inhibitor), Cosentyx[®] (IL-17A inhibitor), Taltz[®] (IL-17A inhibitor), Siliq[™] (IL-17RA), Ilumya[™] (IL-23 inhibitor), Skyrizi[™] (IL-23 inhibitor), Tremfya[®] (IL-23 inhibitor)], Janus kinase inhibitors (JAKi) [e.g., Xeljanz[®]/Xeljanz[®] XR, Cibinqo[™], Olumiant[™], Rinvoq[™]], anti-CD20 monoclonal antibodies [Rituxan[®], Riabni[™], Ruxience[™], Truxima[®], Rituxan Hycela[®]], selective co-stimulation modulators [Orencia[®]], and integrin receptor antagonists [Entyvio[®]] because of the additive immunosuppression, increased risk of neutropenia, as well as increased risk of serious infections.

IV. Appendices/General Information

Appendix A: Abbreviation/Acronym Key

FDA: Food and Drug Administration
IL-23: interleukin-23
JAKi: Janus kinase inhibitors

MTX: methotrexate
PsA: psoriatic arthritis
PsO: plaque psoriasis

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.

Drug Name	Dosing Regimen	Dose Limit/ Maximum Dose
acitretin (Soriatane [®])	PsO 25 or 50 mg PO daily	50 mg/day
cyclosporine (Sandimmune [®] , Neoral [®])	PsO 2.5 – 4 mg/kg/day PO divided BID	4 mg/kg/day
methotrexate (Rheumatrex [®])	PsO 10 – 25 mg/week PO or 2.5 mg PO Q12 hr for 3 doses/week	30 mg/week
Enbrel [®] (etanercept)	PsO <i>Adults:</i> <u>Initial dose:</u> 50 mg SC twice weekly for 3 months	50 mg/week

Drug Name	Dosing Regimen	Dose Limit/ Maximum Dose
	<u>Maintenance dose:</u> 50 mg SC once weekly <i>Pediatrics:</i> Weight < 63 kg: 0.8 mg/kg SC once weekly Weight ≥ 63 kg: 50 mg SC once weekly PsA 25 mg SC twice weekly or 50 mg SC once weekly	
Otezla [®] (apremilast)	PsA <u>Initial dose:</u> Day 1: 10 mg PO QAM Day 2: 10 mg PO QAM and 10 mg PO QPM Day 3: 10 mg PO QAM and 20 mg PO QPM Day 4: 20 mg PO QAM and 20 mg PO QPM Day 5: 20 mg PO QAM and 30 mg PO QPM <u>Maintenance dose:</u> Day 6 and thereafter: 30 mg PO BID	60 mg/day
Taltz [®] (ixekizumab)	PsO <u>Initial dose:</u> 160 mg (two 80 mg injections) SC at week 0, then 80 mg SC at weeks 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12 <u>Maintenance dose:</u> 80 mg SC every 4 weeks PsA <u>Initial dose:</u> 160 mg (two 80 mg injections) SC at week 0 <u>Maintenance dose:</u> 80 mg SC every 4 weeks	80 mg every 4 weeks
Xeljanz [®] (tofacitinib)	PsA 5 mg PO BID	10 mg/day
Xeljanz XR [®] (tofacitinib extended-release)	PsA 11 mg PO QD	11 mg/day

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

None reported

Appendix D: General Information

- Definition of failure of MTX or DMARDs
 - Child-bearing age is not considered a contraindication for use of MTX. Each drug has risks in pregnancy. An educated patient and family planning would allow use of MTX in patients who have no intention of immediate pregnancy.
 - Social use of alcohol is not considered a contraindication for use of MTX. MTX may only be contraindicated if patients choose to drink over 14 units of alcohol per week. However, excessive alcohol drinking can lead to worsening of the condition, so patients who are serious about clinical response to therapy should refrain from excessive alcohol consumption.

V. Dosage and Administration

Indication	Dosing Regimen	Maximum Dose
PsA, PsO	<u>Initial dose:</u> 100 mg SC at weeks 0 and 4 <u>Maintenance dose:</u> 100 mg SC every 8 weeks	100 mg every 8 weeks

VI. Product Availability

Single-dose prefilled syringe or One Press patient-controlled injector: 100 mg/mL

VII. References

1. Tremfya Prescribing Information. Horsham, PA: Janssen Biotech, Inc.; July 2020. Available at: https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2020/761061s007lbl.pdf. Accessed February 21, 2022.
2. Menter A, Strober BE, Kaplan DH, et al. Joint AAD-NPF guidelines of care for the management and treatment of psoriasis with biologics. J Am Acad Dermatol. 2019;80:1029-72. doi:10.1016/j.aad.201811.057.
3. Gossec L, Baraliakos X, Kerschbaumer A, et al. EULAR recommendations for the management of psoriatic arthritis with pharmacological therapies: 2019 update. Ann Rheum Dis. 2020;79:700–712. doi:10.1136/annrheumdis-2020-217159
4. Singh JA, Guyatt G, Ogdie A, et al. 2018 American College of Rheumatology/National Psoriasis Foundation Guideline for the treatment of psoriatic arthritis. American College of Rheumatology. 2019; 71(1):5-32. doi: 10.1002/art.40726

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.

HCP Codes	Description
J1628	Injection, guselkumab, 1 mg

Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals	Date	P&T Approval Date
2Q 2018 annual review: removed trial and failure of phototherapy and topical therapy; modified trial and failure to require use of cyclosporine or acitretin if methotrexate is not tolerated or contraindicated; removed TB testing requirement; references reviewed and updated.	02.27.18	05.18
4Q 2018 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated.	09.04.18	11.18
2Q 2019 annual review: no significant changes; added HIM-Medical Benefit; references reviewed and updated.	02.26.19	05.19
Removed HIM-Medical Benefit line of business; updated preferred redirections based on SDC recommendation and prior clinical guidance: for PsO, removed redirection to adalimumab and added redirection to Taltz.	12.13.19	
2Q 2020 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated.	02.28.20	05.20
RT2: Criteria added for new FDA indication: PsA; references reviewed and updated.	08.25.20	11.20
2Q 2021 annual review: added additional criteria related to diagnosis of moderate-to-severe PsO per 2019 AAD/NPF guidelines specifying at least 3% BSA involvement or involvement of areas that severely impact daily function; added combination of bDMARDs under Section III; references reviewed and updated.	02.23.21	05.21
Per SDC and prior clinical guidance, for PsA removed Simponi as a redirect option and modified to require a trial of all; for Xeljanz redirection requirements added bypass for members with cardiovascular risk and qualified redirection to apply only for member that has not responded or is intolerant to one or more TNF blockers.	08.25.21	11.21
2Q 2022 annual review: for PsO, allowed phototherapy as alternative to systemic conventional DMARD if contraindicated or clinically significant adverse effects are experienced; reiterated requirement against combination use with a bDMARD or JAKi from Section III to Sections I and II; references reviewed and updated.	02.21.22	05.22

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

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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.

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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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