

Benefit Coverage:

Standard of care of treatment of acne is the use of topical and systemic medications which have been shown to result in up to 90% improvement. Such medications are covered if included in the Neighborhood formulary. Non-formulary medications are subject to prior approval by Neighborhood's Pharmacy staff.

The formulary can be accessed on Neighborhood's website, www.nhpri.org

Any treatment, other than medications, or surgical procedure for acne, requires prior authorization and medical review by Medical Management in order to ensure it is not considered cosmetic or experimental/investigational.

Description:

Acne vulgaris is a disorder of the pilosebaceous follicles. It is characterized by comedones (small, flesh-colored, white, or dark bumps that give skin a rough texture), nodules and eruptions of papules, pustules and nodulocystic lesions (deep, inflamed breakouts on the face and/or other areas of the body.)

Active acne is distinguished from acne scarring which results from tissue damage after the inflammatory phase subsides.

Coverage Determination:

Neighborhood Health Plan covers the treatment of active acne vulgaris when provided by medical professionals including physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners

Treatments provided by non-medical providers, including, but not limited to cosmetologists and aestheticians, are not covered services.

Neighborhood Health Plan does not cover treatment of scarring which resulted from acne, as this is considered cosmetic. Cosmetic procedures are those that are done to refine or reshape body structures that are not functionally impaired for the purpose of improving the patient's appearance rather than to improve general health status. Examples of non-covered procedures include but are not limited to, dermabrasion, laserabrasion, chemical peels and surgical debulking.

Photodynamic therapy and laser treatment of active acne is not covered, as it has not yet been shown to be superior to standard medical care, is typically used for acne scarring rather than active acne, and has not been adequately tested for long term efficacy and side effects in active

acne. As of 2008, laser treatment of active acne was considered investigational in a review of 16 randomized controlled trials and three controlled trials.

Criteria:

All of the following criteria must be met for authorization of a requested treatment or procedure:

1. Documentation indicates active acne vulgaris,
2. Treatment/procedure is not considered cosmetic (per coverage determination information above),
3. Treatment/procedure is not considered experimental/investigational (per coverage determination above.) Also refer to Clinical Medical Policy *CMP 026 Experimental – Investigational Services*.

Exclusions:

Cosmetic and experimental or investigational procedures.

CMP Number: CMP-038

CMP Cross Reference: CMP 026 Experimental – Investigational Services.

References:

<http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/cosmetic+surgery>

Haerdal M, Togsverg-Bo K, Wiegell SR et al. Long pulsed dye laser vs. long-pulsed dye laser-assisted photodynamic therapy for acne vulgaris: a randomized controlled trial. *J Am Acad Dermatol* 2008; 58(3): 387-94

Strauss JS, Krowchuk DP, Layden JJ et al. Guidelines if care for acne vulgaris management. *J Am Acad Dermatol*. 2007 Nov;57(5):900

Orringer JS, Kang S, Maier Let al. A randomized controlled split-face clinical trial of 1320-nm Nd:YA G Laser Therapy In The Treatment Of Acne Vulgaris. *J Am Acad Dermatol* 2007; 56(3):432-8

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