

CHAPTER 7 SECTION 7.3

IMMUNOSUPPRESSION THERAPY

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I. DESCRIPTION

Immunosuppressive drugs are used to control rejection reaction(s) caused by antigenic differences resulting from tissue typing and donor matching. Because immunosuppression therapy is essential to successful organ transplantation, rarely, if ever, will transplant patients be able to stop using this therapy. Immunosuppression therapy is also used to treat medical conditions other than transplantation.

II. POLICY

A. Benefits are allowed for immunosuppression therapy following a covered organ (i.e., heart, liver, heart-lung, lung, kidney, liver-kidney, cornea) or bone marrow transplant (refer to [Chapter 3, Section 6.1](#) for covered bone marrow transplants).

B. The immunosuppressive agent must be FDA approved for the specific type of transplant.

C. If immunosuppression therapy is used for other than organ or bone marrow transplantation, the agent must be FDA approved and it must be considered medically appropriate and acceptable treatment for the condition for which it is being used. (Medical review may be required in order to determine the appropriateness of its use.)

III. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A. Benefits are not allowed for any service or care related to the administration of an unproven immunosuppressant drug that is not FDA approved. This includes immunosuppressant drugs which have limited approval by the FDA for use by certain transplant centers.

B. Benefits may not be allowed for immunosuppression therapy following a transplant that is not a benefit of the program.

IV. EXCEPTIONS

Although benefits for immunosuppression therapy are limited to covered transplantations only, benefits may be allowed even though an otherwise covered transplant

may have been denied (for such reasons as being performed in a non-authorized transplant center, not pre-authorized, etc.).

V. EFFECTIVE DATE

A. Benefits are effective on the date the immunosuppressive agent being used became FDA approved for general use in humans, or

B. On the date it became FDA approved or indicated for the condition for which it is being used to treat (see [paragraph II.C.](#) under Policy).

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