

Policy: MP296

Section: Medical Benefit Policy

Subject: Occipital Nerve Block

I. Policy: Occipital Nerve Block

II. Purpose/Objective:

To provide a policy of coverage regarding Occipital Nerve Block

III. Responsibility:

- A. Medical Directors
- B. Medical Management

IV. Required Definitions

1. Attachment – a supporting document that is developed and maintained by the policy writer or department requiring/authoring the policy.
2. Exhibit – a supporting document developed and maintained in a department other than the department requiring/authoring the policy.
3. Devised – the date the policy was implemented.
4. Revised – the date of every revision to the policy, including typographical and grammatical changes.
5. Reviewed – the date documenting the annual review if the policy has no revisions necessary.

V. Additional Definitions

Medical Necessity or Medically Necessary means Covered Services rendered by a Health Care Provider that the Plan determines are:

- a. appropriate for the symptoms and diagnosis or treatment of the Member's condition, illness, disease or injury;
- b. provided for the diagnosis, and the direct care and treatment of the Member's condition, illness disease or injury;
- c. in accordance with current standards of good medical treatment practiced by the general medical community.
- d. not primarily for the convenience of the Member, or the Member's Health Care Provider; and
- e. the most appropriate source or level of service that can safely be provided to the Member. When applied to hospitalization, this further means that the Member requires acute care as an inpatient due to the nature of the services rendered or the Member's condition, and the Member cannot receive safe or adequate care as an outpatient.

Medicaid Business Segment

Medical Necessity shall mean a service or benefit that is compensable under the Medical Assistance Program and if it meets any one of the following standards:

- (i) The service or benefit will, or is reasonably expected to, prevent the onset of an illness, condition or disability.
- (ii) The service or benefit will, or is reasonably expected to, reduce or ameliorate the physical, mental or development effects of an illness, condition, injury or disability.
- (iii) The service or benefit will assist the Member to achieve or maintain maximum functional capacity in performing daily activities, taking into account both the functional capacity of the Member and those functional capacities that are appropriate for members of the same age.

INDICATIONS:

Occipital nerve block may be considered medically necessary when **ALL of the following criteria are met:**

- Diagnosis of occipital neuralgia; **and**
- Documented failure or contraindication to pharmacologic therapy. There must be documentation of the use of at least two (2) classes of medications from the following list of medication classes must be submitted for review: NSAIDs, opiates, non-opioid analgesics, anti-epileptic medications used for treatment of chronic pain, antidepressant medications used for treatment of chronic pain, ASA or ASA derivatives, muscle relaxants, steroids, such as prednisone or Medrol or documented contraindication to each of these drug classes.

LIMITATIONS:

If medical necessity for the procedure is met, up to three (3) injections may be approved initially. If there is greater than 50% reduction in symptoms with the initial blocks, the provider may request an additional series of up to three blocks not to exceed 6 (six) per calendar year.

For GHP Family, the Benefit Limit Exception (BLE) process will apply to requests for more than six (6) injections per calendar year.

EXCLUSIONS:

Other diagnoses, such as cervicogenic headache, will not be considered medically necessary for this procedure and are **NOT COVERED.**

CODING ASSOCIATED WITH: Occipital Nerve Block

The following codes are included below for informational purposes and may not be all inclusive. Inclusion of a procedure or device code(s) does not constitute or imply coverage nor does it imply or guarantee provider reimbursement. Coverage is determined by the member specific benefit plan document and any applicable laws regarding coverage of specific services. Please note that per Medicare coverage rules, only specific CPT/HCPCS Codes may be covered for the Medicare Business Segment. Please consult the CMS website at www.cms.gov or the local Medicare Administrative Carrier (MAC) for more information on Medicare coverage and coding requirements

64405- Injection, anesthetic agent, greater occipital nerve.

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LINE OF BUSINESS:

Eligibility and contract specific benefits, limitations and/or exclusions will apply. Coverage statements found in the line of business specific benefit document will supersede this policy. For Medicare, applicable LCD's and NCD's will supersede this policy. For PA Medicaid Business segment, this policy applies as written.

REFERENCES:

Vanderhoek MD, Hoang HT, Goff B. Ultrasound-Guided Greater Occipital Nerve Blocks and Pulsed Radiofrequency Ablation for Diagnosis and Treatment of Occipital Neuralgia. *Anesth Pain Med.* 2013 Sep;3(2):256-259.

Sahai-Srivastava S, Subhani D. Adverse effect profile of lidocaine injections for occipital nerve block in occipital neuralgia. *J Headache Pain.* 2010 Dec;11(6):519-23.

Vanelderden P, Lataster A, Levy R, et al. Occipital neuralgia. *Pain Pract.* 2010 Mar-Apr;10(2):137-44.

Kapural L, Stillman M, Kapural M, et al. Botulinum toxin occipital nerve block for the treatment of severe occipital neuralgia: a case series. *Pain Pract.* 2007 Dec;7(4):337-40.

Blumenfeld A, Ashkenazi A, Grosberg B, et al. Patterns of use of peripheral nerve blocks and trigger point injections among headache practitioners in the USA: Results of the American Headache Society Interventional Procedure Survey (AHS-IPS). *Headache.* 2010 Jun;50(6):937-42.

Tang Y, Kang J, Zhang Y, et al. Influence of greater occipital nerve block on pain severity in migraine patients: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Am J Emerg Med.* 2017 Nov;35(11):1750-1754.

Cuadrado ML, Aledo-Serrano Á, Navarro P, et al. Short-term effects of greater occipital nerve blocks in chronic migraine: A double-blind, randomised, placebo-controlled clinical trial. Cephalalgia. 2017;37(9):864-872.

This policy will be revised as necessary and reviewed no less than annually.

Devised: 1/2015

Revised: 9/15, 7/17(revise drug requirement) , 8/18 (Removed Prior Auth)

Reviewed: 11/16; 7/19, 10/20

Geisinger Health Plan may refer collectively to health care coverage sponsors Geisinger Health Plan, Geisinger Quality Options, Inc., and Geisinger Indemnity Insurance Company, unless otherwise noted. Geisinger Health Plan is part of Geisinger, an integrated health care delivery and coverage organization.