

MEDICARE COVERAGE OF IMMUNOSUPPRESSIVE DRUGS

Revised May 2023

Dear Clinician,

Immunosuppressive drugs are covered by Medicare Part B for beneficiaries who have had organ transplants. The Durable Medical Equipment Medicare Administrative Contractors (DME MACs) frequently receive questions regarding under what circumstances immunosuppressive drug therapy is covered. In general, coverage of immunosuppressive drugs requires that, in part:

- The patient was enrolled in Medicare Part A at the time of the transplant.
- The patient is enrolled in Medicare Part B at the time that the drugs are dispensed.

Immunosuppressive drugs provided to Medicare beneficiaries whose transplant occurred prior to their enrollment in Medicare Part A should not be billed to the DME MAC. For those patients, the drugs may be eligible for coverage under Medicare Part D.

To assist pharmacies dispensing immunosuppressive drugs to your patients, please ensure that you:

1. Document the date of the transplant and the facility where the transplant occurred (if known) in the patient's medical records.
2. List all immunosuppressive drugs ordered, including the dosage, strength, and frequency of use, in your Plan of Care. If you order two dosage strengths of the same drug, it is helpful to indicate this via specific instructions on the prescription, as well as in the medical record, for how these are to be taken (such as in combination, alternate days, etc.).
3. Include the following required elements on your immunosuppressive drug standard written order (SWO):
 - Beneficiary's name or Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI)
 - Order Date
 - General description of the item
 - The description can be either a general description (such as wheelchair or hospital bed), a HCPCS code, a HCPCS code narrative, or a brand name/model number
 - Quantity to be dispensed, if applicable
 - Treating practitioner name or National Provider Identifier (NPI)

- Treating practitioner's signature
4. Sign and date your medical records.

Note: A SWO is required before billing. Someone other than the physician/practitioner may complete the SWO of the item unless statute, manual instructions, the contractor’s local coverage determination (LCD), or policy articles specify otherwise. However, the prescribing physician/practitioner must review the content and sign and date the document.

Medicare places certain limitations on prescriptions for immunosuppressive drugs. Prescriptions for immunosuppressive drugs generally should be non-refillable and limited to a 30-day supply. The 30-day guideline is necessary because dosage frequently diminishes over a period of time, and further, it is not uncommon for the clinician to change the prescription from one drug to another. Also, these drugs are expensive and the coinsurance liability on unused drugs could be a financial burden to your patient. Unless there are special circumstances (such as extended travel outside of the US), the DME MACs will not consider a supply of drugs in excess of 30 days to be reasonable and necessary, and they may deny payment.

Clinicians can view the complete LCD and related policy article titled “Immunosuppressive Drugs” in the [Medicare Coverage Database](#).

Suppliers may ask you to provide the documentation from your medical records on a routine basis in order to assure that Medicare will pay for these drugs and that your patient will not be held financially liable. Providing this documentation is in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule. No specific authorization is required from your patient. Also note that you may not charge the supplier or the beneficiary to provide this information. Please cooperate with the supplier so that they can provide the immunosuppressive drugs that are needed by your patient.

Sincerely,

Noridian Healthcare Solutions Medical Directors	CGS Administrators Medical Directors
Smitha M. Ballyamanda, MD, CAQSM Medical Director, DME MAC, Jurisdiction A Noridian Healthcare Solutions, LLC	Sunil V. Lalla, MD, FACS, CPC Medical Director, DME MAC, Jurisdiction B CGS Administrators, LLC
Angela S. Jenny, DO Medical Director, DME MAC, Jurisdiction D Noridian Healthcare Solutions, LLC	Robert D. Hoover, Jr., MD, MPH, FACP Medical Director, DME MAC, Jurisdiction C CGS Administrators, LLC