

# Ophthalmologic Policy: Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor (VEGF) Inhibitors

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[➔ Instructions for Use](#)

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<b>Related Medicare Advantage Policy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Medicare Part B Step Therapy Programs</a></li> </ul>

## Coverage Rationale

[➔ See Benefit Considerations](#)

This policy provides information about the use of certain specialty pharmacy medications administered by the intravitreal route for ophthalmologic conditions.

This policy refers to the following drug products, all of which are vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) inhibitors:

- Avastin® (bevacizumab)
- Beovu® (brolucizumab-dbll)
- Eylea® (aflibercept)
- Lucentis® (ranibizumab)
- Macugen® (pegaptanib)

The following information pertains to medical necessity review:

### General Requirements (applicable to all medical necessity requests)

- For initial therapy, both of the following:
  - Diagnosis; and
  - Intravitreal VEGF inhibitor administration is no more than 12 doses per year per eye, regardless of diagnosis.
- For continuation of therapy, both of the following:
  - Documentation of positive clinical response to anti-VEGF therapy; and
  - Intravitreal VEGF inhibitor administration is no more than 12 doses per year per eye, regardless of diagnosis.

## Diagnosis-Specific Requirements

The information below indicates the list of proven and medically necessary indications.

Beovu (brolucizumab) is proven and medically necessary for the treatment of:

- Neovascular age-related macular degeneration (AMD)

Avastin (bevacizumab) is proven and medically necessary for the treatment of:

- Choroidal neovascularization secondary to pathologic myopia, angioid streaks/pseudoxanthoma elasticum, or ocular histoplasmosis syndrome (OHS)
- Diabetic macular edema (DME)
- Macular edema secondary to branch retinal vein occlusion (BRVO) or central retinal vein occlusion (CRVO)
- Neovascular age-related macular degeneration (AMD)
- Neovascular glaucoma
- Neovascularization of the iris (NVI) (rubeosis iridis)
- Proliferative diabetic retinopathy
- Type I retinopathy of prematurity

Eylea (afibercept) is proven and medically necessary for the treatment of:

- Diabetic macular edema (DME)
- Diabetic retinopathy
- Macular edema secondary to branch retinal vein occlusion (BRVO) or central retinal vein occlusion (CRVO)
- Neovascular age-related macular degeneration (AMD)

Lucentis (ranibizumab) is proven and medically necessary for the treatment of:

- Choroidal neovascularization secondary to pathologic myopia, angioid streaks/pseudoxanthoma elasticum, or ocular histoplasmosis syndrome (OHS)
- Diabetic macular edema (DME)
- Diabetic retinopathy
- Macular edema secondary to branch retinal vein occlusion (BRVO) or central retinal vein occlusion (CRVO)
- Neovascular age-related macular degeneration (AMD)

Macugen (pegaptanib) is proven and medically necessary for the treatment of:

- Diabetic macular edema
- Neovascular age-related macular degeneration (AMD)

## Additional Information

Avastin (bevacizumab) is supplied in sterile vials containing a solution of 25 mg/mL. Doses utilized in ophthalmic conditions generally range from 6.2 mcg to 2.5 mg. Therefore, bevacizumab in vials is often divided into single-dose, prefilled syringes for intravitreal use by compounding pharmacies. Compounding pharmacies must comply with United States Pharmacopeia (USP) Chapter 797, which sets standards for the compounding, transportation, and storage of compounded sterile products (CSP).<sup>1</sup> The Pharmacy Compounding Accreditation Board can verify that the pharmacy is adhering to these standards.<sup>2</sup>

The American Society of Retinal Specialists (ASRS) is committed to ensuring that retina specialists have access to compounded drugs (such as Avastin) that are prepared with high-quality material following good quality controls and sound engineering design by appropriately trained personnel. Refer to their information page at <https://www.asrs.org/advocacy-practice/access-to-safe-compounded-agents> for resources pertaining to access of safe compounded agents.<sup>14</sup>

Refer to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Section of this policy for information related to contamination of compounded bevacizumab. In an effort to guard against contamination during the compounding process, the United States Veterans Health Administration (USVHA) requires that only USVHA pharmacies may dispense bevacizumab for intravitreal administration to Veterans Administration beneficiaries. The medication must be dispensed directly to the VA ophthalmologist, who will then be responsible for preparing and administering the bevacizumab dose for each patient. In addition to strict labeling and storage requirements, the ophthalmologist is required to prepare only one dose of medication from each vial; if both eyes are to be treated, a separate vial and syringe must be utilized.<sup>3</sup>

# Definitions

Type I Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP), also known as “high-risk pre-threshold ROP”, is defined as any of the following:

- Any stage ROP with plus disease in zone I
- Stage 3 ROP without plus disease in zone I
- Stage 2 or 3 ROP with plus disease in zone II

## Applicable Codes

The following list(s) of procedure and/or diagnosis codes is provided for reference purposes only and may not be all inclusive. Listing of a code in this policy does not imply that the service described by the code is a covered or non-covered health service. Benefit coverage for health services is determined by the member specific benefit plan document and applicable laws that may require coverage for a specific service. The inclusion of a code does not imply any right to reimbursement or guarantee claim payment. Other Policies and Guidelines may apply.

HCPSC Code	Description	Brand Name
J0178	Injection, aflibercept, 1 mg	Eylea
J0179	Injection, brolucizumab-dbl, 1 mg	Beovu
J2503	Injection, pegaptanib sodium, 0.3 mg	Macugen
J2778	Injection, ranibizumab, 0.1 mg	Lucentis
J9035	Injection, bevacizumab, 10 mg	Avastin

Diagnosis Code	Description	Applies to HCPSC Code				
		J0178	J0179	J2503	J2778	J9035
B39.4	Histoplasmosis capsulati, unspecified				x	x
B39.5	Histoplasmosis duboisii				x	x
B39.9	Histoplasmosis, unspecified				x	x
E08.311	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with unspecified diabetic retinopathy with macular edema	x		x	x	x
E08.319	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with unspecified diabetic retinopathy without macular edema	x			x	
E08.3211	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with mild non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy with macular edema, right eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3212	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with mild non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy with macular edema, left eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3213	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with mild non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy with macular edema, bilateral	x		x	x	x
E08.3219	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with mild non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy with macular edema, unspecified eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3291	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with mild non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy without macular edema, right eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3292	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with mild non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy without	x		x	x	x

Diagnosis Code	Description	Applies to HCPCS Code				
		J0178	J0179	J2503	J2778	J9035
	macular edema, left eye					
E08.3293	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with mild non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy without macular edema, bilateral	x		x	x	x
E08.3299	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with mild non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy without macular edema, unspecified eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3311	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with moderate non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy with macular edema, right eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3312	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with moderate non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy with macular edema, left eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3313	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with moderate non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy with macular edema, bilateral	x		x	x	x
E08.3319	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with moderate non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy with macular edema, unspecified eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3391	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with moderate non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy without macular edema, right eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3392	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with moderate non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy without macular edema, left eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3393	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with moderate non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy without macular edema, bilateral	x		x	x	x
E08.3399	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with moderate non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy without macular edema, unspecified eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3411	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with severe non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy with macular edema, right eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3412	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with severe non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy with macular edema, left eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3413	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with severe non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy with macular edema, bilateral	x		x	x	x
E08.3419	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with severe non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy with macular edema, unspecified eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3491	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with severe non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy without macular edema, right eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3492	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with severe non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy without	x		x	x	x

Diagnosis Code	Description	Applies to HCPCS Code				
		J0178	J0179	J2503	J2778	J9035
	macular edema, left eye					
E08.3493	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with severe non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy without macular edema, bilateral	x		x	x	x
E08.3499	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with severe non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy without macular edema, unspecified eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3511	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with proliferative diabetic retinopathy with macular edema, right eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3512	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with proliferative diabetic retinopathy with macular edema, left eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3513	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with proliferative diabetic retinopathy with macular edema, bilateral	x		x	x	x
E08.3519	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with proliferative diabetic retinopathy with macular edema, unspecified eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3521	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with proliferative diabetic retinopathy with traction retinal detachment involving the macula, right eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3522	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with proliferative diabetic retinopathy with traction retinal detachment involving the macula, left eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3523	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with proliferative diabetic retinopathy with traction retinal detachment involving the macula, bilateral	x		x	x	x
E08.3529	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with proliferative diabetic retinopathy with traction retinal detachment involving the macula, unspecified eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3531	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with proliferative diabetic retinopathy with traction retinal detachment not involving the macula, right eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3532	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with proliferative diabetic retinopathy with traction retinal detachment not involving the macula, left eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3533	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with proliferative diabetic retinopathy with traction retinal detachment not involving the macula, bilateral	x		x	x	x
E08.3539	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with proliferative diabetic retinopathy with traction retinal detachment not involving the macula, unspecified eye	x		x	x	x
E08.3541	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with proliferative diabetic retinopathy with combined traction retinal detachment and rhegmatogenous retinal detachment, right eye	x		x	x	x

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