

Clinical Policy: Deflazacort (Emflaza)

Reference Number: CP.PHAR.331

Effective Date: 04.01.17

Last Review Date: 02.25

Line of Business: Commercial, HIM, Medicaid

[Revision Log](#)

See [Important Reminder](#) at the end of this policy for important regulatory and legal information.

DescriptionDeflazacort (Emflaza[®]) is a corticosteroid.**FDA Approved Indication(s)**

Emflaza is indicated for the treatment of Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD) in patients 2 years of age and older.

Policy/Criteria

Provider must submit documentation (such as office chart notes, lab results or other clinical information) supporting that member has met all approval criteria.

It is the policy of health plans affiliated with Centene Corporation[®] that deflazacort and Emflaza are **medically necessary** when the following criteria are met:

I. Initial Approval Criteria**A. Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (must meet all):**

1. Diagnosis of DMD confirmed by one of the following (a or b):
 - a. Genetic testing (e.g., dystrophin deletion or duplication mutation found);
 - b. If genetic studies are negative (i.e., no mutation identified), positive muscle biopsy (e.g., absence of dystrophin protein);
2. Prescribed by or in consultation with a neurologist;
3. Age \geq 2 years;
4. Failure of a \geq 6 month trial of prednisone, unless contraindicated or clinically significant adverse effects are experienced;
5. For Emflaza requests, member must use generic deflazacort, unless contraindicated or clinically significant adverse effects are experienced;
6. Documentation of member's current weight in kg;
7. Dose does not exceed 0.9 mg/kg per day.

Approval duration: 6 months**B. Other diagnoses/indications (must meet 1 or 2):**

1. If this drug has recently (within the last 6 months) undergone a label change (e.g., newly approved indication, age expansion, new dosing regimen) that is not yet reflected in this policy, refer to one of the following policies (a or b):
 - a. For drugs on the formulary (commercial, health insurance marketplace) or PDL (Medicaid), the no coverage criteria policy for the relevant line of business:

- CP.CPA.190 for commercial, HIM.PA.33 for health insurance marketplace, and CP.PMN.255 for Medicaid; or
- b. For drugs NOT on the formulary (commercial, health insurance marketplace) or PDL (Medicaid), the non-formulary policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.190 for commercial, HIM.PA.103 for health insurance marketplace, and CP.PMN.16 for Medicaid; or
2. If the requested use (e.g., diagnosis, age, dosing regimen) is NOT specifically listed under section III (Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is NOT authorized) AND criterion 1 above does not apply, refer to the off-label use policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.09 for commercial, HIM.PA.154 for health insurance marketplace, and CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid.

II. Continued Therapy

A. Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (must meet all):

1. Member meets one of the following (a or b):
 - a. Currently receiving medication via Centene benefit or member has previously met initial approval criteria;
 - b. Member is currently receiving medication and is enrolled in a state and product with continuity of care regulations (*refer to state specific addendums for CC.PHARM.03A and CC.PHARM.03B*);
2. Member is responding positively to therapy;
3. For Emflaza requests, member must use generic deflazacort, unless contraindicated or clinically significant adverse effects are experienced;
4. Documentation of member's current weight in kg;
5. If request is for a dose increase, new dose does not exceed 0.9 mg/kg per day.

Approval duration:

Medicaid/HIM – 12 months

Commercial – 12 months or duration of request, whichever is less

B. Other diagnoses/indications (must meet 1 or 2):

1. If this drug has recently (within the last 6 months) undergone a label change (e.g., newly approved indication, age expansion, new dosing regimen) that is not yet reflected in this policy, refer to one of the following policies (a or b):
 - a. For drugs on the formulary (commercial, health insurance marketplace) or PDL (Medicaid), the no coverage criteria policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.190 for commercial, HIM.PA.33 for health insurance marketplace, and CP.PMN.255 for Medicaid; or
 - b. For drugs NOT on the formulary (commercial, health insurance marketplace) or PDL (Medicaid), the non-formulary policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.190 for commercial, HIM.PA.103 for health insurance marketplace, and CP.PMN.16 for Medicaid; or
2. If the requested use (e.g., diagnosis, age, dosing regimen) is NOT specifically listed under section III (Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is NOT authorized) AND criterion 1 above does not apply, refer to the off-label use policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.09 for commercial, HIM.PA.154 for health insurance marketplace, and CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid.

III. Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is NOT authorized:

- A. Non-FDA approved indications, which are not addressed in this policy, unless there is sufficient documentation of efficacy and safety according to the off label use policies – CP.CPA.09 for commercial, HIM.PA.154 for health insurance marketplace, and CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid or evidence of coverage documents.

IV. Appendices/General Information

Appendix A: Abbreviation/Acronym Key

DMD: Duchenne muscular dystrophy

FDA: Food and Drug Administration

Appendix B: Therapeutic Alternatives

This table provides a listing of preferred alternative therapy recommended in the approval criteria. The drugs listed here may not be a formulary agent for all relevant lines of business and may require prior authorization.

Drug Name	Dosing Regimen	Dose Limit/ Maximum Dose
prednisone*	0.75 mg/kg/day PO (preferred) <u>Alternative dosing regimens</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.3 mg/kg/day PO (<i>lesser efficacy and fewer adverse events</i>) • 10 mg/kg/weekend PO 	Varies based on weight

Therapeutic alternatives are listed as Brand name[®] (generic) when the drug is available by brand name only and generic (Brand name[®]) when the drug is available by both brand and generic.

**Off-label*

Appendix C: Contraindications/Boxed Warnings

- Contraindication(s): hypersensitivity to deflazacort or any of the inactive ingredients in Emflaza
- Boxed warning(s): none reported

Appendix D: General Information

- Examples of positive response to corticosteroid therapy (e.g., Agamree[®], Emflaza, prednisone) include improvement in muscle strength tests (e.g., Medical Research Council [MRC] scale for muscle strength with 0 being no movement and 5 being normal strength), pulmonary function tests (e.g., forced vital capacity [FVC] and maximal expiratory pressure), walk tests (e.g., 6 minute walk test [6MWT] distance), and timed functional tests (e.g., standing from lying position; climbing 4 stairs; running/walking 30 feet; propelling a wheelchair 30 feet).
- In clinical trials, Emflaza has demonstrated similar efficacy to prednisone with regard to muscle strength, motor function, pulmonary function, and loss of ambulation. Emflaza may be associated with potentially less weight gain than prednisone; however, it may also be associated with more growth reduction and cataracts. In an evidence report published August 2019, the Institute for Clinical and Economic Review (ICER) concludes: "...we

have moderate certainty that deflazacort has comparable or better net health benefits compared to prednisone.”

V. Dosage and Administration

Indication	Dosing Regimen	Maximum Dose
DMD	0.9 mg/kg/dose PO QD	0.9 mg/kg/dose

VI. Product Availability

- Tablets: 6 mg, 18 mg, 30 mg, 36 mg
- Oral suspension: 22.75 mg/mL

VII. References

1. Emflaza Prescribing Information. South Plainfield, NJ: PTC Therapeutics, Inc.; May 2024. Available at: <https://www.emflaza.com>. Accessed October 21, 2024.
2. Gloss D, Moxley RT, Ashwal S, Oskoui M. Practice guideline update summary: Corticosteroid treatment of Duchenne muscular dystrophy: Report of the Guideline Development Subcommittee of the American Academy of Neurology. *Neurology*. 2016;86(5):465-472. Doi:10.1212/WNL.0000000000002337. Reaffirmed on January 22, 2022.
3. Bushby K, Finkel R, Birnkrant DJ, et al. Diagnosis and management of Duchenne muscular dystrophy, part 1: diagnosis, and pharmacological and psychosocial management. *Lancet Neurol*. 2010; 9(1): 77-93.
4. Clinical Pharmacology [database online]. Tampa, FL: Gold Standard, Inc.; 2024. Available at: <http://www.clinicalpharmacology-ip.com/>.
5. Birnkrant DJ, Bushby K, Bann CM, et al. Diagnosis and management of Duchenne muscular dystrophy, part 1: diagnosis, and neuromuscular, rehabilitation, endocrine, and gastrointestinal and nutritional management. *Lancet Neurol*. 2018; 17: 251-267.
6. Institute for Clinical and Economic Review. Deflazacort, eteplirsen, and golodirsen for Duchenne muscular dystrophy: Effectiveness and value. Published August 15, 2019. Available at: https://icer.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Corrected_ICER_DMD-Final-Report_042222.pdf. Accessed October 31, 2024.

Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals	Date	P&T Approval Date
1Q 2021 annual review: no significant changes; references to HIM.PHAR.21 revised to HIM.PA.154; references reviewed and updated.	10.09.20	02.21
1Q 2022 annual review: no significant changes; for Commercial, changed continued approval authorization from “Length of Benefit” to “12 months or duration of request, whichever is less”; references reviewed and updated.	09.14.21	02.22
Template changes applied to other diagnoses/indications and continued therapy section.	09.21.22	
1Q 2023 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated.	11.07.22	02.23

Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals	Date	P&T Approval Date
1Q 2024 annual review: no significant changes; added criterion “documentation of member’s current weight in kg” to initial and continued approval criteria; references reviewed and updated.	10.13.23	02.24
Revised policy/criteria section to include generic deflazacort and added redirection to generic deflazacort for brand Emflaza requests.	05.14.24	
1Q 2025 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated.	10.31.24	02.25

Important Reminder

This clinical policy has been developed by appropriately experienced and licensed health care professionals based on a review and consideration of currently available generally accepted standards of medical practice; peer-reviewed medical literature; government agency/program approval status; evidence-based guidelines and positions of leading national health professional organizations; views of physicians practicing in relevant clinical areas affected by this clinical policy; and other available clinical information. The Health Plan makes no representations and accepts no liability with respect to the content of any external information used or relied upon in developing this clinical policy. This clinical policy is consistent with standards of medical practice current at the time that this clinical policy was approved. “Health Plan” means a health plan that has adopted this clinical policy and that is operated or administered, in whole or in part, by Centene Management Company, LLC, or any of such health plan’s affiliates, as applicable.

The purpose of this clinical policy is to provide a guide to medical necessity, which is a component of the guidelines used to assist in making coverage decisions and administering benefits. It does not constitute a contract or guarantee regarding payment or results. Coverage decisions and the administration of benefits are subject to all terms, conditions, exclusions, and limitations of the coverage documents (e.g., evidence of coverage, certificate of coverage, policy, contract of insurance, etc.), as well as to state and federal requirements and applicable Health Plan-level administrative policies and procedures.

This clinical policy is effective as of the date determined by the Health Plan. The date of posting may not be the effective date of this clinical policy. This clinical policy may be subject to applicable legal and regulatory requirements relating to provider notification. If there is a discrepancy between the effective date of this clinical policy and any applicable legal or regulatory requirement, the requirements of law and regulation shall govern. The Health Plan retains the right to change, amend or withdraw this clinical policy, and additional clinical policies may be developed and adopted as needed, at any time.

This clinical policy does not constitute medical advice, medical treatment, or medical care. It is not intended to dictate to providers how to practice medicine. Providers are expected to exercise professional medical judgment in providing the most appropriate care, and are solely responsible for the medical advice and treatment of members. This clinical policy is not intended to recommend treatment for members. Members should consult with their treating physician in connection with diagnosis and treatment decisions.

Providers referred to in this clinical policy are independent contractors who exercise independent judgment and over whom the Health Plan has no control or right of control. Providers are not agents or employees of the Health Plan.

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Note:

For Medicaid members, when state Medicaid coverage provisions conflict with the coverage provisions in this clinical policy, state Medicaid coverage provisions take precedence. Please refer to the state Medicaid manual for any coverage provisions pertaining to this clinical policy.

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