

## Clinical Policy: Verteporfin (Visudyne)

Reference Number: LA.PHAR.187

Effective Date: 10.05.23

Last Review Date: ~~02.23.2603-05-25~~

Line of Business: Medicaid

[Coding Implications](#)  
[Revision Log](#)

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

**\*\*Please note: This policy is for medical benefit\*\***

### Description

Verteporfin (Visudyne<sup>®</sup>) is a light activated drug used in photodynamic therapy.

### FDA Approved Indication(s)

Visudyne is indicated for the treatment of patients with predominantly classic subfoveal choroidal neovascularization (CNV) due to:

- Age-related macular degeneration (AMD)
- Pathologic myopia
- Presumed ocular histoplasmosis

Limitation(s) of use: There is insufficient evidence to indicate Visudyne for the treatment of predominantly occult subfoveal CNV.

### 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 Louisiana Healthcare Connections that Visudyne is **medically necessary** when the following criteria are met:

#### I. Initial Approval Criteria

##### A. Choroidal Neovascularization (must meet all):

1. Diagnosis of subfoveal CNV due to one of the following (a, b, or c):
  - a. AMD;
  - b. Pathologic myopia;
  - c. Presumed ocular histoplasmosis;
2. Prescribed by or in consultation with an ophthalmologist;
3. Age  $\geq$  18 years;
4. For AMD, member meets one of the following (a or b):
  - a. Failure of bevacizumab intravitreal solution, unless contraindicated or clinically significant adverse effects are experienced;  
*\*Prior authorization may be required for bevacizumab intravitreal solution. Requests for IV formulations of Avastin, Mvasi, and Zirabev will not be approved*
  - b. Disease has progressed after use of a vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) inhibitor as first-line treatment (see Appendix B);

**CLINICAL POLICY**  
Verteporfin



5. For CNV due to pathologic myopia, failure of bevacizumab intravitreal solution or ranibizumab, unless clinically significant adverse effects are experienced or both are contraindicated;

*~~3~~ Prior authorization may be required for bevacizumab intravitreal solution and ranibizumab*

6. Dose does not exceed 6 mg/m<sup>2</sup> body surface area every 3 months.

**Approval duration: 3 months (~~1-dose~~)**

**B. Central Serous Chorioretinopathy (off-label) (must meet all):**

1. Diagnosis of central serous chorioretinopathy confirmed by retinal scan;
2. Prescribed by or in consultation with an ophthalmologist;
3. Disease is characterized as chronic or recurrent as evidenced by one of the following (a or b):
  - a. Persistent subretinal fluid for ≥ 3 months;
  - b. Persistent subretinal fluid for < 3 months and prescriber attestation that member is symptomatic (e.g., blurry central vision);
4. Member meets one of the following (a or b):
  - a. Member is not taking medications from any of the following classes: corticosteroids, stimulants, decongestants, or erectile dysfunction medications;
  - b. Documentation that prescriber has evaluated medications as risk factors if they are from any of the following classes: corticosteroids, stimulants, decongestants, or erectile dysfunction medications;
5. Dose does not exceed 6 mg/m<sup>2</sup> body surface area every 3 months.

**Approval duration: 3 months (~~1-dose~~)**

**C. 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 LA.PMN.255
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 LA.PMN.53.

**II. Continued Therapy**

**A. Choroidal Neovascularization (must meet all):**

- ~~1.~~ Currently receiving medication via Louisiana Healthcare Connections benefit or member has previously met initial approval criteria;
- ~~2.~~ Member is responding positively to therapy as evidenced by one of the following (a, b, c, or d):
  - a. Detained neovascularization;
  - b. Improvement in visual acuity;
  - c. Maintenance of corrected visual acuity from prior treatment;
  - d. Supportive findings from optical coherence tomography or fluorescein angiography;
- ~~3.~~ Recent fluorescein angiography, conducted at least 3 months after the last treatment, shows recurrent or persistent choroidal neovascular leakage;

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**CLINICAL POLICY**  
Verteporfin



~~3-4~~ If request is for a dose increase, new dose does not exceed 6 mg/m<sup>2</sup> body surface area every 3 months.

**Approval duration: 3 months (~~1 dose~~)**

**B. Central Serous Chorioretinopathy (off-label):**

1. Re-authorization is not permitted. Members must meet the initial approval criteria.

**Approval duration: Not applicable**

**C. 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 LA.PMN.255
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 LA.PMN.53

**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 policy LA.PMN.53

**IV. Appendices/General Information**

*Appendix A: Abbreviation/Acronym Key*

AMD: age-related macular degeneration

CNV: choroidal neovascularization

mCNV: myopic choroidal neovascularization

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 and may require prior authorization.*

Drug Name	Dosing Regimen	Dose Limit/ Maximum Dose
<b>VEGF Inhibitors</b>		
bevacizumab (Avastin®)	<b>Neovascular (wet) AMD<sup>†</sup>:</b> 1.25 <del>to</del> 2.5 mg administered by intravitreal injection every 4 weeks	<del>2.5</del> 1.25 mg/month
	<b>mCNV<sup>†</sup>:</b> 0.05 mL initial intravitreal injection, followed by monthly evaluation for additional injections as needed	0.5 mL/month
Beovu® (brolucizumab)	<b>Neovascular (wet) AMD:</b> 6 mg (1 vial) administered by intravitreal injection every 4 weeks for the first 3 months, then every 8 or 12 weeks thereafter	6 mg (1 vial) every 2 months after loading period

**CLINICAL POLICY**  
Verteporfin



Drug Name	Dosing Regimen	Dose Limit/ Maximum Dose
<p>Eylea<sup>®</sup>, Eylea<sup>®</sup> HD (aflibercept) and biosimilars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <del>aflibercept-yszy (Opuviz<sup>™</sup>)</del></li> <li>• <del>aflibercept-jbvf (Yesafili<sup>™</sup>)</del></li> <li>• aflibercept-mrbb (Ahzantive<sup>™</sup>)</li> <li>• aflibercept-abzv (Enzeevu<sup>™</sup>)</li> <li>• <u>aflibercept-boav (Eydenzelt<sup>®</sup>)</u></li> <li>• <u>aflibercept-yszy (Opuviz<sup>™</sup>)</u></li> <li>• aflibercept-ayyh (Pavblu<sup>™</sup>)</li> <li>• <u>aflibercept-jbvf (Yesafili<sup>™</sup>)</u></li> </ul>	<p><b>Neovascular (wet) AMD:</b> Eylea, <del>Opuviz, Yesafili</del>, Ahzantive, Enzeevu, <u>Eydenzelt, Opuviz</u>, Pavblu, <u>Yesafili</u>: 2 mg (0.05 mL) administered by intravitreal injection once a month for 3 months then 2mg every 2 months.</p> <p>Eylea HD: 8 mg administered by intravitreal injection every 4 weeks (approximately every 28 days +/- 7 days) for the first three doses, followed by 8 mg via intravitreal injection once every 8 to 16 weeks, +/- 1 week</p>	<p>Eylea, <del>Opuviz, Yesafili</del>, Ahzantive, Enzeevu, <u>Eydenzelt, Opuviz</u>, Pavblu, <u>Yesafili</u>: 2 mg/month</p> <p>Eylea HD: 0.8 mg/dose</p>
<p>Lucentis<sup>®</sup> (ranibizumab) and biosimilars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ranibizumab-nuna (Byooviz<sup>®</sup>)</li> <li>• ranibizumab-eqrn (Cimerli<sup>™</sup>)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Neovascular (wet) AMD:</b> 0.5 mg (0.05 mL) administered by intravitreal injection once a month.</p> <p><u>Alternative dosing:</u> Once monthly injections for three months followed by 4-5 doses dispersed among the following 9 months</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Treatment may be reduced to one injection every 3 months after the first four injections if monthly injections are not feasible.</p>	0.5 mg/month
	<p><b>Myopic CNV:</b> 0.5 mg (0.05 mL) administered by intravitreal injection once a month for up to 3 months. Patients may be retreated if needed.</p>	0.5 mg/month
<p><del>Maeugen<sup>®</sup> (pegaptanib)</del></p>	<p><del><b>Neovascular (wet) AMD:</b> 0.3 mg (0.09 mL) administered by intravitreal injection every 6 weeks</del></p>	<p><del>0.3 mg/6 weeks</del></p>

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Therapeutic alternatives are listed as Brand name<sup>®</sup> (generic) when the drug is available by brand name only and generic (Brand name<sup>®</sup>) when the drug is available by both brand and generic.  
† Off-label

**CLINICAL POLICY**  
**Verteporfin**



*Appendix C: Contraindications/Boxed Warnings*

- ~~Contraindication(s):~~
  - ~~Porphyria~~
- ~~Hypersensitivity/porphyria or hypersensitivity~~
- Boxed warning(s): none reported

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*Appendix D: General Information*

- In the ANti-VEGF Antibody for the Treatment of Predominantly Classic CHORoidal Neovascularisation in AMD (ANCHOR) trial, the number of patients that lost fewer than 15 letters at 12 months was achieved by 96.4% of patients treated with Lucentis 0.5 mg compared to 64.3% of patients treated with Visudyne (p < 0.001). Rate of intraocular inflammation was higher for patients treated with Lucentis 0.5 mg at 15% compared to Visudyne at 2.8%.
- In the RADIANCE, a Phase III, 12-month, multicenter, randomized, double-masked, active-controlled trial, Lucentis was compared to vPDT (Visudyne and photodynamic therapy) for the treatment of mCNV. Lucentis treatment in groups I and II was superior to vPDT based on mean average BCVA change from baseline to month 1 through month 3 (group I: +10.5, group II: +10.6 vs. group III: +2.2 Early Treatment Diabetic Retinopathy Study [ETDRS] letters; both p < 0.0001). Lucentis treatment guided by disease activity was noninferior to VA stabilization-guided retreatment based on mean average BCVA change from baseline to month 1 through month 6 (group II: +11.7 vs. group I: +11.9 ETDRS letters; p < 0.00001). Mean BCVA change from baseline to month 12 was +13.8 (group I), +14.4 (group II), and +9.3 ETDRS letters (group III). At month 12, 63.8% to 65.7% of patients showed resolution of myopic CNV leakage. Patients received a median of 4.0 (group I) and 2.0 (groups II and III) ranibizumab injections over 12 months. No deaths or cases of endophthalmitis and myocardial infarction occurred.

**V. Dosage and Administration**

Indication	Dosing Regimen	Maximum Dose
Predominantly classic subfoveal CNV due to AMD, pathologic myopia or presumed ocular histoplasmosis	6 mg/m <sup>2</sup> IV diluted with 5% dextrose to a final volume of 30 mL infused over 10 minutes	6 mg/m <sup>2</sup> IV

**VI. Product Availability**

Vial for reconstitution: 15 mg (2 mg/mL after reconstitution)

**VII. References**

1. Visudyne Prescribing Information. Bridgewater, NJ: Bausch & Lomb Americas Inc.; February 2023. Available at: <https://www.bauschretinarx.com/visudyne/>. Accessed ~~November 15, 2024~~ October 29, 2025.
2. American Academy of Ophthalmology Retina/Vitreous Panel. Preferred Practice Pattern® Guidelines. Age-Related Macular Degeneration. San Francisco, CA: American Academy of Ophthalmology; ~~October 2019~~ September 2024. Available at: [www.aao.org/ppp](http://www.aao.org/ppp). Accessed ~~November 15, 2024~~ October 29, 2025.

**CLINICAL POLICY**  
Verteporfin



3. Diaz RI, Sigler EJ, Rafieetary MR, Calzada JI. Ocular histoplasmosis syndrome. *Surv Ophthalmol*. 2015 Jul-Aug; 60(4): 279-295. doi: 10.1016/j.survophthal.2015.02.005.
4. Wolf S, Valciuniene VJ, Laganovska G, et al. RADIANCE: a randomized controlled study of ranibizumab in patients with choroidal neovascularization secondary to pathologic myopia. *Ophthalmology*. 2014; 121(3):682-92.e2. doi: 10.1016/j.ophtha.2013.10.023.
5. Salehi M, Wenick S, Law HA, Evans JR, Gehlbach P. Interventions for central serous chorioretinopathy: a network meta-analysis. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev*. 2016; 12. doi: 10.1002/14651858.CD011841.pub2.
6. Hanumunthadu D, Tan ACS, Singh SR, et al. Management of chronic central serous chorioretinopathy. *Indian J Ophthalmol*. 2018 Dec; 66(12): 1704-1714. doi: 10.4103/ijo.IJO\_1077\_18.
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8. [Clinical Pharmacology \[database online\]. Tampa, FL: Elsevier; 2025. URL: www.clinicalkeys.com/pharmacology.](http://www.clinicalkeys.com/pharmacology)

**Coding Implications**

Codes referenced in this clinical policy are for informational purposes only. Inclusion or exclusion of any codes does not guarantee coverage. Providers should reference the most up-to-date sources of professional coding guidance prior to the submission of claims for reimbursement of covered services.

HCPCS Codes	Description
J3396	Injection, verteporfin, 0.1 mg

Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals	Date	LDH Approval Date
Converted corporate to local policy.	05.2021	09.18.21
Added off-label criteria for central serous chorioretinopathy; converted redirection language from “must use” to “Failure of” bevacizumab intravitreal solution; References reviewed and updated.	07.22	8.18.22
Template changes applied to other diagnoses/indications and continued therapy section. References reviewed and updated. Added verbiage this policy is for medical benefit only.	06.02.23	10.05.23
No significant changes; in Appendix B, added Eylea HD dosing information; references reviewed and updated.	05.26.24	07.29.24
Annual review: for CNV due to pathologic myopia, revised failure of Avastin or Lucentis to bevacizumab and ranibizumab; in Appendix B, added aflibercept and ranibizumab biosimilars; references reviewed and updated.	03.05.25	<a href="#">05.19.25</a>
<a href="#">Annual review: clarified one dose every 3 months; references reviewed and updated.</a>	<a href="#">02.23.26</a>	

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## CLINICAL POLICY

### Verteporfin



#### **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. LHCC 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.

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**CLINICAL POLICY**  
Verteporfin



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