

To all beneficiaries enrolled in a Prepaid Health Plan (PHP): for questions about benefits and services available on or after implementation, please contact your PHP.

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**NC Medicaid
Vagus Nerve Stimulation
For the Treatment of Seizures**

**Medicaid
Clinical Coverage Policy No.:1A-33
Amended Date: June 1, 2023**

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Related Clinical Coverage Policies

Refer to <https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/> for the related coverage policies listed below:

1.0 Description of the Procedure, Product, or Service

Approximately 40 percent of all individuals with epilepsy have medically refractory seizures. Primarily generalized seizures are the most common type of intractable seizures in children; while in adults, complex partial seizures are the most common intractable seizure type. Medically refractory seizures are those seizures that are not completely controlled by medical therapy. That means that seizures continue to occur despite treatment with a maximally tolerated dose of a first-line anti-epilepsy drug (AED) as monotherapy or in at least one combination with an adjuvant medication. The terms "intractable" or "medically refractory" are interchangeable.

In the past 10 years, significant advances have occurred in surgical treatment for epilepsy and in medical treatment of epilepsy with newly developed and approved medications. Despite these advances, however, 25–50 percent of patients with epilepsy experience breakthrough seizures or suffer from debilitating adverse effects of antiepileptic drugs. Vagus Nerve Stimulation (VNS) has been investigated as a treatment alternative in patients with medically refractory partial-onset seizures for whom surgery is not recommended or for whom surgery has failed.

Vagus Nerve Stimulation (VNS) is performed by an implantable stimulator as a treatment for refractory seizures. VNS treatment sends preprogrammed, intermittent electrical pulses through the vagus nerve in the neck to the brain. These pulses originate in a small generator device that is implanted in the chest. The exact mechanism of the antiepileptic effects of VNS are not fully understood, but the procedure may reduce the severity or the frequency of seizures in selected candidates who have an intact vagus nerve.

1.1 Definitions

None Apply.

2.0 Eligibility Requirements

2.1 Provisions

2.1.1 General

(The term “General” found throughout this policy applies to all Medicaid policies)

1. An eligible beneficiary shall be enrolled in the NC Medicaid Program *(Medicaid is NC Medicaid program, unless context clearly indicates otherwise)*;
 - a. Provider(s) shall verify each Medicaid beneficiary’s eligibility each time a service is rendered.
 - b. The Medicaid beneficiary may have service restrictions due to their eligibility category that would make them ineligible for this service.

2.1.2 Specific

(The term “Specific” found throughout this policy only applies to this policy)

a. **Medicaid**

None Apply.

2.2 Special Provisions

2.2.1 EPSDT Special Provision: Exception to Policy Limitations for a Medicaid Beneficiary under 21 Years of Age

a. **42 U.S.C. § 1396d(r) [1905(r) of the Social Security Act]**

Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) is a federal Medicaid requirement that requires the state Medicaid agency to cover services, products, or procedures for Medicaid beneficiary under 21 years of age **if** the service is **medically necessary health care** to correct or ameliorate a defect, physical or mental illness, or a condition [health problem] identified through a screening examination (includes any evaluation by a physician or other licensed practitioner).

This means EPSDT covers most of the medical or remedial care a child needs to improve or maintain his or her health in the best condition possible, compensate for a health problem, prevent it from worsening, or prevent the development of additional health problems.

Medically necessary services will be provided in the most economic mode, as long as the treatment made available is similarly efficacious to the service requested by the beneficiary’s physician, therapist, or other licensed practitioner; the determination process does not delay the delivery of the needed service; and the determination does not limit the beneficiary’s right to a free choice of providers.

EPSDT does not require the state Medicaid agency to provide any service, product or procedure:

1. that is unsafe, ineffective, or experimental or investigational.
2. that is not medical in nature or not generally recognized as an accepted method of medical practice or treatment.

Service limitations on scope, amount, duration, frequency, location of service, and other specific criteria described in clinical coverage policies may be exceeded or may not apply as long as the provider’s documentation shows that the requested service is medically necessary “to correct or ameliorate a defect, physical or mental illness, or a condition” [health problem]; that is, provider documentation shows how the service, product, or procedure meets all EPSDT criteria, including to correct or improve or maintain the beneficiary’s health in the best condition possible, compensate for a health problem, prevent it from worsening, or prevent the development of additional health problems.

b. **EPSDT and Prior Approval Requirements**

1. If the service, product, or procedure requires prior approval, the fact that the beneficiary is under 21 years of age does **NOT** eliminate the requirement for prior approval.

2. **IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION** about EPSDT and prior approval is found in the *NCTracks Provider Claims and Billing Assistance Guide*, and on the EPSDT provider page. The Web addresses are specified below.

NCTracks Provider Claims and Billing Assistance Guide:

<https://www.nctracks.nc.gov/content/public/providers/provider-manuals.html>

EPSDT provider page: <https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/>

3.0 When the Procedure, Product, or Service Is Covered

Note: Refer to Subsection 2.2.1 regarding EPSDT Exception to Policy Limitations for Medicaid Beneficiaries under 21 Years of Age.

3.1 General Criteria Covered

Medicaid shall cover the procedure, product, or service related to this policy when medically necessary, and:

- a. the procedure, product, or service is individualized, specific, and consistent with symptoms or confirmed diagnosis of the illness or injury under treatment, and not in excess of the beneficiary's needs;
- b. the procedure, product, or service can be safely furnished, and no equally effective and more conservative or less costly treatment is available statewide; and
- c. the procedure, product, or service is furnished in a manner not primarily intended for the convenience of the beneficiary, the beneficiary's caretaker, or the provider.

3.2 Specific Criteria Covered

3.2.1 Specific criteria covered by Medicaid

Medicaid covers VNS for the treatment of seizures when it is determined to be medically necessary because BOTH of the following criteria are met:

- a. The beneficiary has medically refractory* seizures; **AND**
*Medically refractory means
 1. seizures that occur in spite of therapeutic levels of anti-epileptic drugs; **OR**
 2. seizures that cannot be treated with therapeutic levels of anti-epileptic drugs because of intolerable adverse side effects.
- b. The beneficiary has failed or is not eligible for surgical treatment.

3.2.2 Medicaid Additional Criteria Covered

None Apply.

4.0 When the Procedure, Product, or Service Is Not Covered

Note: Refer to Subsection 2.2.1 regarding EPSDT Exception to Policy Limitations for Medicaid Beneficiaries under 21 Years of Age.

4.1 General Criteria Not Covered

Medicaid shall not cover the procedure, product, or service related to this policy when:

- a. the beneficiary does not meet the eligibility requirements listed in **Section 2.0**;
 1. the beneficiary does not meet the criteria listed in **Section 3.0**;
 2. the procedure, product, or service duplicates another provider's procedure, product, or service; or
 3. the procedure, product, or service is experimental, investigational, or part of a clinical trial.

4.2 Specific Criteria Not Covered

4.2.1 Specific Criteria Not Covered by Medicaid

Medicaid shall not cover VNS for the treatment of seizures for indications that do not meet the criteria in **Subsection 3.2.1**; and for

- a. beneficiaries who can be treated successfully with anti-epileptic drugs.
- b. treatment of beneficiaries with depression.
- c. treatment of essential tremor.
- d. treatment of headaches.
- e. treatment of obesity.

4.2.2 Medicaid Additional Criteria Not Covered

None Apply.

5.0 Requirements for and Limitations on Coverage

Note: Refer to Subsection 2.2.1 regarding EPSDT Exception to Policy Limitations for Medicaid Beneficiaries under 21 Years of Age.

5.1 Prior Approval

Medicaid shall not require prior approval for VNS.

5.2 Prior Approval Requirements

5.2.1 General

None Apply.

5.2.2 Specific

None Apply.

5.3 Additional Limitations or Requirements

None Apply.

6.0 Providers Eligible to Bill for the Procedure, Product, or Service

To be eligible to bill for the procedure, product, or service related to this policy, the provider(s) shall:

- a. meet Medicaid qualifications for participation;
- b. have a current and signed Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Provider Administrative Participation Agreement; and
- c. bill only for procedures, products, and services that are within the scope of their clinical practice, as defined by the appropriate licensing entity.

6.1 Provider Qualifications and Occupational Licensing Entity Regulations

None Apply.

6.2 Provider Certifications

None Apply.

7.0 Additional Requirements

Note: Refer to Subsection 2.2.1 regarding EPSDT Exception to Policy Limitations for Medicaid Beneficiaries under 21 Years of Age.

7.1 Compliance

Provider(s) shall comply with the following in effect at the time the service is rendered:

- a. All applicable agreements, federal, state and local laws and regulations including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and record retention requirements; and
- b. All NC Medicaid's clinical (medical) coverage policies, guidelines, policies, provider manuals, implementation updates, and bulletins published by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), DHHS, DHHS division(s) or fiscal contractor(s).

8.0 Policy Implementation/Revision Information

Original Effective Date: December 1, 1994

Revision Information:

Date	Section Revised	Change
07/01/2012	Throughout	Initial promulgation of current coverage for Medicaid and NCHC.
10/01/2015	All Sections and Attachments	Updated policy template language and added ICD-10 codes to comply with federally mandated 10/1/2015 implementation where applicable.
06/01/2018	Subsection 4.2.1	Removed outdated information, “Other service exclusions or limitations may apply. Refer to A Consumer’s Guide to North Carolina Health Care Coverage Programs for Families and Children: North Carolina Health Choice and Medicaid.”
06/01/2018	Attachment A, B	Added diagnosis codes G40.301, G40.401, G40.409, G40.501, G40.509, G40.801, G40.802, G40.812, G40.A01, G40.A09, G40.B01 and G40.B09 as billable diagnoses.
02/01/2019	Attachment A	Added 95976, 95977, 95983, and 95984. Deleted 95974, +95975, 95978, and +95979.
03/15/2019	Table of Contents	Added, “To all beneficiaries enrolled in a Prepaid Health Plan (PHP): for questions about benefits and services available on or after November 1, 2019, please contact your PHP.”
03/15/2019	All Sections and Attachments	Updated policy template language.
12/12/2019	Table of Contents	Updated policy template language, “To all beneficiaries enrolled in a Prepaid Health Plan (PHP): for questions about benefits and services available on or after implementation, please contact your PHP.”
12/12/2019	Attachment A	Added, “Unless directed otherwise, Institutional Claims must be billed according to the National Uniform Billing Guidelines. All claims must comply with National Coding Guidelines.
09/15/2020	Attachment A (F)	Revised Place of Service to include Independent Diagnostic Testing Facilities (IDTF) for CPT codes 95976, 95977, 95983, and 95984
06/01/2023	All Sections and Attachments	Updated policy template language due to North Carolina Health Choice Program’s move to Medicaid. Policy posted 6/1/2023 with an effective date of 4/1/2023.

Attachment A: Claims-Related Information

Provider(s) shall comply with the, *NCTracks Provider Claims and Billing Assistance Guide*, Medicaid bulletins, fee schedules, NC Medicaid’s clinical coverage policies and any other relevant documents for specific coverage and reimbursement for Medicaid:

A. Claim Type

Professional (CMS-1500/837P transaction)

Unless directed otherwise, Institutional Claims must be billed according to the National Uniform Billing Guidelines. All claims must comply with National Coding Guidelines.

B. International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth Revisions, Clinical Modification (ICD-10-CM) and Procedural Coding System (PCS)

Provider(s) shall report the ICD-10-CM and Procedural Coding System (PCS) to the highest level of specificity that supports medical necessity. Provider(s) shall use the current ICD-10 edition and any subsequent editions in effect at the time of service. Provider(s) shall refer to the applicable edition for code description, as it is no longer documented in the policy.

ICD-10- Code(s)			
G40.001	G40.319	G40.821	T85.110A
G40.009	G40.401	G40.822	T85.111A
G40.011	G40.409	G40.823	T85.118A
G40.019	G40.411	G40.824	T85.120A
G40.101	G40.419	G40.89	T85.128A
G40.109	G40.501	G40.901	T85.190A
G40.111	G40.509	G40.909	T85.199A
G40.119	G40.801	G40.A01	
G40.201	G40.802	G40.A09	
G40.209	G40.803	G40.A11	
G40.211	G40.804	G40.A19	
G40.219	G40.811	G40.B01	
G40.301	G40.812	G40.B09	
G40.309	G40.813	G40.B11	
G40.311	G40.814	G40.B19	

C. Code(s)

Provider(s) shall report the most specific billing code that accurately and completely describes the procedure, product or service provided. Provider(s) shall use the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT), Health Care Procedure Coding System (HCPCS), and UB-04 Data Specifications Manual (for a complete listing of valid revenue codes) and any subsequent editions in effect at the time of service. Provider(s) shall refer to the applicable edition for the code description, as it is no longer documented in the policy.

If no such specific CPT or HCPCS code exists, then the provider(s) shall report the procedure, product or service using the appropriate unlisted procedure or service code.

CPT Code(s)	
61885	64585
61886	95970
61888	95976
64568	95977
64569	95983
64570	95984

Unlisted Procedure or Service

CPT: The provider(s) shall refer to and comply with the Instructions for Use of the CPT Codebook, Unlisted Procedure or Service, and Special Report as documented in the current CPT in effect at the time of service.

HCPCS: The provider(s) shall refer to and comply with the Instructions For Use of HCPCS National Level II codes, Unlisted Procedure or Service and Special Report as documented in the current HCPCS edition in effect at the time of service

D. Modifiers

Providers are required to follow applicable modifier guidelines.

E. Billing Units

Provider(s) shall report the appropriate code(s) used which determines the billing unit(s).

F. Place of Service

Inpatient Hospital, Outpatient Hospital, and Independent Diagnostic Testing Facility (IDTF) for services 95976, 95977, 95983, and 95984.

G. Co-payments

For Medicaid refer to Medicaid State Plan:

<https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/meetings-notices/medicaid-state-plan-public-notices>

H. Reimbursement

Provider(s) shall bill their usual and customary charges.

For a schedule of rates, refer to: <https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/>