

**NC Medicaid  
Outpatient Pharmacy  
Prior Approval Criteria  
Hematinics**

**Effective Date: March 4, 2002  
Revised Date: ~~March 1, 2024~~**

**DRAFT**

**Therapeutic Class Code:** N1B, **N1J**

**Therapeutic Class Description:** Hematinics, Other, **Blood Cell Stimulators**

<b>Medication</b>
Procrit, Epogen (Erythropoietin)
Aranesp (Darbepoetin Alfa)
Mircera
Retacrit
<b>Vafseo (vadadustat)</b>

**Eligible Beneficiaries**

NC Medicaid (Medicaid) beneficiaries shall be enrolled on the date of service and may have service restrictions due to their eligibility category that would make them ineligible for this service.

**EPSDT Special Provision: Exception to Policy Limitations for Beneficiaries under 21 Years of Age**

**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 beneficiaries 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 clinician). This means EPSDT covers most of the medical or remedial care a child needs to improve or maintain his/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

- a. that is unsafe, ineffective, or experimental/investigational.
- b. that is not medical in nature or not generally recognized as an accepted method of medical practice or treatment.

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Service limitations on scope, amount, duration, frequency, location of service, and/or 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.

**EPSDT and Prior Approval Requirements**

- a. 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.
- b. **IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION** about EPSDT and prior approval is found in the *Basic Medicaid Billing Guide*, sections 2 and 6, 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/medicaid/get-started/find-programs-and-services-right-you/medicaid-benefit-children-and-adolescents>

**For Procrit, Epogen, Aranesp, Micera, and Retacrit**

Approval will be considered in the following circumstances:

1. Anemia associated with renal failure **OR**
2. Anemia associated with HIV Infection **OR**
3. Anemia associated with chemotherapy **OR**
4. Anemia associated with myelodysplastic syndromes **OR**
5. Drug induced anemia such as with ribavirin or zidovudine **OR**
6. Sickle Cell Disease

**Initial Therapy - Beneficiary shall meet all requirements:**

1. Hemoglobin less than or equal to 11 for initial therapy (for anemia associated with renal failure, HIV, chemotherapy, myelodysplastic syndromes, and drug induced anemia) **OR** Hemoglobin less than or equal to 10 (for Sickle Cell) **AND**
2. Lab data within 3 months of PA

**Continuation of Therapy - Beneficiary must meet all requirements:**

1. Hemoglobin less than or equal to 12 (for anemia associated with renal failure, HIV, chemotherapy, myelodysplastic syndromes, and drug induced anemia) **OR** Hemoglobin less than or equal to 11 (for Sickle Cell) **AND**
2. Lab data within 3 months of PA

**For Vafseo**

Approval will be considered in the following circumstances:

1. Beneficiary is age 18 or older **AND**
2. Beneficiary has diagnosis of anemia due to chronic kidney disease **AND**
3. Beneficiary has been receiving dialysis for at least 3 months **AND**
4. Beneficiary is receiving the lowest dose sufficient to reduce the need for red blood cell

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**transfusions AND**

5. Vafseo is not being used as a substitute for transfusion in beneficiaries requiring immediate correction AND
6. Beneficiary does not have uncontrolled hypertension AND
7. Other causes of anemia have been excluded and corrected (ex. vitamin deficiency, metabolic or chronic inflammatory conditions, bleeding) before beginning treatment with Vafseo AND
8. Beneficiary does not have a history of myocardial infarction, cerebrovascular event, or acute coronary syndrome within the 3 months prior to starting Vafseo AND
9. A risk/benefit evaluation has been performed for beneficiaries at increased risk for gastrointestinal erosions

**Initial Therapy - Beneficiary shall meet all requirements:**

1. Hemoglobin less than or equal to 11 for initial therapy (labs must be submitted with initial request)
2. Liver function tests (ALT, AST, alkaline phosphatase, and total bilirubin must be submitted with initial request)
3. Lab data within 2 months of request

**Continuation of Therapy - Beneficiary must meet all requirements:**

1. Hemoglobin less than or equal to 12 (labs must be submitted with initial request)
2. Lab data within 2 months of request
3. Treatment Vafseo is not being continued beyond 24 weeks of therapy if a clinically meaningful increase in hemoglobin level is not being achieved

**Procedures**

- May be approved for up to six months.
- Preferred Drug List (PDL) criteria also apply if requested medication is on the PDL. (ex. try and fail preferred(s) first or a clinical reason the preferred(s) cannot be tried or other criteria as noted on the PDL).

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**References**

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13. Mircera Prescribing Information. Vifor Pharma. Switzerland. June 2018.
14. Vafseo Prescribing information. Akebia Therapeutics, Inc. Cambridge, MA. March 2024.

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**Criteria Change Log**

04/04/2002	Criteria effective date (Procrit and Epogen)
07/01/2003	Added criteria for Aranesp
11/01/2014	Added new codes for Aranesp
02/25/2019	Removed discontinued GCN 97072
11/07/2019	Added Mircera and Retacrit
03/01/2024	Add diagnosis of Sickle Cell Disease with Hemoglobin less than or equal to 10 (for Sickle Cell) for initial and Hemoglobin less than or equal to 11 (for Sickle Cell) continuation. Remove NC Health Choice
xx/xx/xxxx	Added Vafseo