

Drug Policy

Policy:	201731	Initial Effective Date: 07/24/2017
Code(s):	HCPCS J1628	Annual Review Date: 10/17/2024
SUBJECT:	Tremfya® (guselkumab for subcutaneous injection)	Last Revised Date: 10/17/2024

Subject to Site of Care

Prior approval is required for some or all procedure codes listed in this Corporate Drug Policy.

Initial and renewal requests for the medication(s) listed in this policy are subject to site of care management. When billed under the medical benefit, administration of the medication will be restricted to a non-hospital facility-based location (i.e., home infusion provider, provider’s office, free-standing ambulatory infusion center) unless the member meets the site of care exception criteria. To view the exception criteria and a list of medications subject to site of care management please [click here](#).

OVERVIEW

Tremfya is a fully human immunoglobulin (Ig)G monoclonal antibody that binds to interleukin (IL)-23, a pro-inflammatory cytokine. It binds to the p19 subunit of IL-23 and inhibits the intracellular and downstream signaling of IL-23 which is required for the terminal differentiation and survival of T helper (Th)17 cells. Tremfya is indicated for treatment of adults with moderate to severe plaque psoriasis who are candidates for systemic therapy or phototherapy among other indications. In plaque psoriasis, the recommended dose is 100 mg subcutaneously (SC) at Weeks 0 and 4 and then once every 8 weeks (Q8W) thereafter. Tremfya is intended for use under the guidance and supervision of a physician. Those trained in SC injection technique using the pen or prefilled syringe may self-inject when deemed appropriate.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy involves the use of Tremfya. Prior authorization is recommended for medical benefit coverage of Tremfya. Approval is recommended for those who meet the conditions of coverage in the **Criteria, Dosing, Initial/Extended Approval, Duration of Therapy**, and **Labs/Diagnostics** for the diagnosis provided. **Waste Management** applies for all covered conditions that are administered by a healthcare professional. **Conditions Not Recommended for Approval** are listed following the recommended authorization criteria and Waste Management section. Requests for uses not listed in this policy will be reviewed for evidence of efficacy and for medical necessity on a case-by-case basis.

Because of the specialized skills required for evaluation and diagnosis of patients treated with Tremfya as well as the monitoring required for AEs and long-term efficacy, initial approval requires Tremfya be prescribed by or in consultation with a physician who specializes in the condition being treated. All approvals for initial therapy are provided for the initial approval duration noted below; if reauthorization is allowed, a response to therapy is required for continuation of therapy

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unless otherwise noted below. **Tremfya is subject to the Inflammatory Conditions Care Value Program under pharmacy benefits.**

RECOMMENDED AUTHORIZATION CRITERIA

Coverage of Tremfya is recommended in those who meet the following criteria:

Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-Approved Indications

1) **Plaque Psoriasis.**

A. Initial Therapy. Approve if the patient meets the following criteria (i, ii, iii and iv):

i. The patient is an adult ≥ 18 years of age; AND

ii. The patient meets ONE of the following conditions (a, b or c):

a) The patient has tried at least at least one traditional systemic agent for psoriasis (e.g., methotrexate [MTX], cyclosporine, acitretin tablets, or psoralen plus ultraviolet A light [PUVA]) for at least 3 months, unless intolerant.

b) The patient has had a 3-month trial or previous intolerance to at least one biologic [See Appendix A for examples]; OR

c) The patient has a contraindication to methotrexate (MTX), as determined by the prescribing physician; AND

iii. Tremfya is prescribed by or in consultation with a dermatologist; AND

iv. Site of care medical necessity is met.*

B. Patient is Currently Receiving Tremfya. Approve for 1 year if the patient has responded, as determined by the prescriber. The patient may not have a full response, but there should have been a recent or past response to Tremfya. Site of care medical necessity is met.*

Dosing of plaque psoriasis: SubQ: 100 mg at weeks 0, 4, and then every 8 weeks thereafter

Initial Approval/ Extended Approval.

A) *Initial Approval:* 3 months (90 days)

B) *Extended Approval:* 1 year (365 days)

2) **Psoriatic Arthritis.** Approve for the duration noted if the patient meets ONE of the following (A or B):

A. Initial Therapy. Approve if the patient meets the following criteria:

i. Tremfya is prescribed by or in consultation with a rheumatologist or a dermatologist; AND

ii. Site of care medical necessity is met.*

B. Patient is Currently Receiving Tremfya. Approve for if the patient has responded, as determined by the prescriber. The patient may not have a full response, but there should have been a recent or past response to Tremfya. Site of care medical necessity is met.*

Dosing of Psoriatic Arthritis: SubQ: 100 mg at weeks 0, 4, and then every 8 weeks thereafter

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Initial Approval/ Extended Approval.

A) *Initial Approval:* 6 months (180 days)

B) *Extended Approval:* 1 year (365 days)

3) **Ulcerative Colitis.** Approve for the duration noted if the patient meets ONE of the following (A or B):

A) **Initial Therapy.** Approve for 6 months if the patient meets ALL of the following (i, ii, iii, and iv):

i. Patient is ≥ 18 years of age; AND

ii. According to the prescriber, the patient will receive three induction doses with Tremfya intravenous within 3 months of initiating therapy with Tremfya subcutaneous; AND

iii. Patient meets ONE of the following (a or b):

a) Patient has had a trial of one systemic agent for ulcerative colitis; OR

Note: Examples include 6-mercaptopurine, azathioprine, cyclosporine, tacrolimus, or a corticosteroid such as prednisone, methylprednisolone. A trial of a mesalamine product does not count as a systemic therapy for ulcerative colitis. A trial of one biologic other than the requested drug also counts as a trial of one systemic agent for ulcerative colitis. A biosimilar of the requested biologic does not count. Refer to [Appendix](#) for examples of biologics used for ulcerative colitis.

b) Patient meets BOTH of the following [(1) and (2)]:

(1) Patient has pouchitis; AND

(2) Patient has tried an antibiotic, probiotic, corticosteroid enema, or mesalamine enema; AND

Note: Examples of antibiotics include metronidazole and ciprofloxacin. Examples of corticosteroid enemas include hydrocortisone enema.

iv. The medication is prescribed by or in consultation with a gastroenterologist.

B) **Patient is Currently Receiving Tremfya Subcutaneous.** Approve for 1 year if the patient meets BOTH of the following (i and ii):

i. Patient has been established on the requested drug for at least 6 months; AND

Note: A patient who has received < 6 months of therapy or who is restarting therapy with the requested drug is reviewed under criterion A (Initial Therapy).

ii. Patient meets at least ONE of the following (a or b):

a) When assessed by at least one objective measure, patient experienced a beneficial clinical response from baseline (prior to initiating the requested drug); OR

Note: Examples of assessment for inflammatory response include fecal markers (e.g., fecal calprotectin), serum markers (e.g., C-reactive protein), endoscopic assessment, and/or reduced dose of corticosteroids.

b) Compared with baseline (prior to initiating the requested drug), patient experienced an improvement in at least one symptom, such as decreased pain, fatigue, stool frequency, and/or decreased rectal bleeding.

Dosing of Ulcerative Colitis: Maintenance: 100 mg administered by subcutaneous injection at Week 16, and every 8 weeks thereafter, or 200 mg administered by subcutaneous injection at Week 12, and every 4 weeks thereafter. Use the lowest effective recommended dosage to maintain therapeutic response.

Initial Approval/ Extended Approval.

A) *Initial Approval:* 6 months (180 days)

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B) Extended Approval: 1 year (365 days)

Waste Management for All Indications.

Available as a Solution Prefilled Syringe, Subcutaneous [preservative free]:

Tremfya: 100 mg/mL (1 mL) [contains polysorbate 80]

CONDITIONS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

Tremfya has not been shown to be effective, or there are limited or preliminary data or potential safety concerns that are not supportive of general approval for the following conditions. Rationale for non-coverage for these specific conditions is provided below. (Note: This is not an exhaustive list of Conditions Not Recommended for Approval.)

- 1. Concurrent Use with a Biologic or with a Targeted Synthetic Oral Small Molecule Drug.** This medication should not be administered in combination with another biologic or with a targeted synthetic oral small molecule drug used for an inflammatory condition (see [Appendix](#) for examples). Combination therapy is generally not recommended due to a potentially higher rate of adverse events and lack of controlled clinical data supporting additive efficacy.
Note: This does NOT exclude the use of conventional synthetic disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (e.g., methotrexate, leflunomide, hydroxychloroquine, or sulfasalazine) in combination with this medication.
- 2. Concurrent use with Otezla.** There is no evidence to suggest Tremfya and Otezla in combination

Documentation Requirements:

The Company reserves the right to request additional documentation as part of its coverage determination process. The Company may deny reimbursement when it has determined that the services performed were not medically necessary, investigational or experimental, not within the scope of benefits afforded to the member and/or a pattern of billing or other practice has been found to be either inappropriate or excessive. Additional documentation supporting medical necessity for the services provided must be made available upon request to the Company. Documentation requested may include patient records, test results and/or credentials of the provider ordering or performing a service. The Company also reserves the right to modify, revise, change, apply and interpret this policy at its sole discretion, and the exercise of this discretion shall be final and binding.

REFERENCES

1. Tremfya™ injection [prescribing information]. Horsham, PA: Janssen Biotech; April 2019.
2. Blauvelt A, Papp KA, Griffiths CE, et al. Efficacy and safety of guselkumab, an anti-interleukin-23 monoclonal antibody, compared with adalimumab for the continuous treatment of patients with moderate to severe psoriasis: results from the phase III, double-blinded, placebo- and active comparator-controlled VOYAGE 1 trial. *J Am Acad Dermatol.* 2017;76(3):405-417.
3. Reich K, Armstrong AW, Foley P, et al. Efficacy and safety of guselkumab, an anti-interleukin-23 monoclonal antibody, compared with adalimumab for the treatment of patients with moderate to severe psoriasis with randomized withdrawal and retreatment: results from the phase III, double-blind, placebo- and active comparator-controlled VOYAGE 2 trial. *J Am Acad Dermatol.* 2017;76(3):418-431.
4. Hsu S, Papp KA, Lebwohl MG, et al. Consensus guidelines for the management of plaque psoriasis. *Arch Dermatol.* 2012;148(1):95-102.

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5. Furst DE, Keystone EC, So AK, et al. Updated consensus statement on biological agents for the treatment of rheumatic diseases, 2012. *Ann Rheum Dis.* 2013;72 Suppl 2:ii2-34.
6. Otezla® tablets [prescribing information]. Summit, NJ: Celgene Corporation; December 2015.

Appendix A

	Mechanism of Action	Examples of Indications*
Biologics		
Adalimumab SC Products (Humira®, biosimilars)	Inhibition of TNF	AS, CD, JIA, PsO, PsA, RA, UC
Cimzia® (certolizumab pegol SC injection)	Inhibition of TNF	AS, CD, nr-axSpA, PsO, PsA, RA
Etanercept SC Products (Enbrel®, biosimilars)	Inhibition of TNF	AS, JIA, PsO, PsA, RA
Infliximab IV Products (Remicade®, biosimilars)	Inhibition of TNF	AS, CD, PsO, PsA, RA, UC
Zymfentra® (infliximab-dyyb SC injection)	Inhibition of TNF	CD, UC
Simponi®, Simponi Aria® (golimumab SC injection, golimumab IV infusion)	Inhibition of TNF	SC formulation: AS, PsA, RA, UC
		IV formulation: AS, PJIA, PsA, RA
Tocilizumab Products (Actemra® IV, biosimilar; Actemra SC, biosimilar)	Inhibition of IL-6	SC formulation: PJIA, RA, SJIA
		IV formulation: PJIA, RA, SJIA
Kevzara® (sarilumab SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-6	RA
Orencia® (abatacept IV infusion, abatacept SC injection)	T-cell costimulation modulator	SC formulation: JIA, PSA, RA
		IV formulation: JIA, PsA, RA
Rituximab IV Products (Rituxan®, biosimilars)	CD20-directed cytolytic antibody	RA
Kineret® (anakinra SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-1	JIA [^] , RA
Omvoh® (mirikizumab IV infusion, SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-23	UC
Stelara® (ustekinumab SC injection, ustekinumab IV infusion)	Inhibition of IL-12/23	SC formulation: CD, PsO, PsA, UC
		IV formulation: CD, UC
Siliq® (brodalumab SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-17	PsO
Cosentyx® (secukinumab SC injection; secukinumab IV infusion)	Inhibition of IL-17A	SC formulation: AS, ERA, nr-axSpA, PsO, PsA
		IV formulation: AS, nr-axSpA, PsA
Taltz® (ixekizumab SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-17A	AS, nr-axSpA, PsO, PsA
Bimzelx® (bimekizumab-bkzx SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-17A/17F	AS, nr-axSpA, PsO, PsA
Ilumya® (tildrakizumab-asmn SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-23	PsO
Skyrizi® (risankizumab-rzaa SC injection, risankizumab-rzaa IV infusion)	Inhibition of IL-23	SC formulation: CD, PSA, PsO, UC
		IV formulation: CD, UC
Tremfya® (guselkumab SC injection, guselkumab IV infusion)	Inhibition of IL-23	SC formulation: PsA, PsO, UC
		IV formulation: UC
Entyvio® (vedolizumab IV infusion, vedolizumab SC injection)	Integrin receptor antagonist	CD, UC
Oral Therapies/Targeted Synthetic Oral Small Molecule Drugs		
Otezla® (apremilast tablets)	Inhibition of PDE4	PsO, PsA
Cibinqo™ (abrocitinib tablets)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	AD
Olumiant® (baricitinib tablets)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	RA, AA
Litfulo® (ritlectinib capsules)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	AA
Leqselvi® (deuruxolitinib tablets)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	AA
Rinvoq® (upadacitinib extended-release tablets)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	AD, AS, nr-axSpA, RA, PsA, UC

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Rinvoq® LQ (upadacitinib oral solution)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	PsA, PJIA
Sotyktu® (deucravacitinib tablets)	Inhibition of TYK2	PsO
Xeljanz® (tofacitinib tablets/oral solution)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	RA, PJIA, PsA, UC
Xeljanz® XR (tofacitinib extended-release tablets)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	RA, PsA, UC
Zeposia® (ozanimod tablets)	Sphingosine 1 phosphate receptor modulator	UC
Velsipity® (etrasimod tablets)	Sphingosine 1 phosphate receptor modulator	UC

* Not an all-inclusive list of indications. Refer to the prescribing information for the respective agent for FDA-approved indications; SC – Subcutaneous; TNF – Tumor necrosis factor; AS – Ankylosing spondylitis; CD – Crohn’s disease; JIA – Juvenile idiopathic arthritis; PsO – Plaque psoriasis; PsA – Psoriatic arthritis; RA – Rheumatoid arthritis; UC – Ulcerative colitis; nr-axSpA – Non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis; IV – Intravenous, PJIA – Polyarticular juvenile idiopathic arthritis; IL – Interleukin; SJIA – Systemic juvenile idiopathic arthritis; ^ Off-label use of Kineret in JIA supported in guidelines; ERA – Enthesitis-related arthritis; DMARD – Disease-modifying antirheumatic drug; PDE4 – Phosphodiesterase 4; JAK – Janus kinase; AD – Atopic dermatitis; AA – Alopecia areata; TYK2 – Tyrosine kinase 2.