Intracavitary Balloon Catheter Brain Brachytherapy for Malignant Gliomas or Metastasis to the Brain

Policy # 00434
Original Effective Date: 10/15/2014
Current Effective Date: 01/11/2021

Applies to all products administered or underwritten by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana and its subsidiary, HMO Louisiana, Inc.(collectively referred to as the "Company"), unless otherwise provided in the applicable contract. Medical technology is constantly evolving, and we reserve the right to review and update Medical Policy periodically.

Services Are Considered Investigational

Coverage is not available for investigational medical treatments or procedures, drugs, devices or biological products.

Based on review of available data, the Company considers intracavitary balloon catheter brain brachytherapy, alone or as part of a multimodality treatment regimen, for primary or recurrent malignant brain tumors to be **investigational.***

Based on review of available data, the Company considers intracavitary balloon catheter brain brachytherapy, alone or as part of a multimodality treatment regimen, for metastasis to the brain from primary solid tumors outside the brain to be **investigational.***

Background/Overview

Brain Tumors

Malignant Gliomas

Diffuse fibrillary astrocytoma is the most common glial brain tumor in adults. It is classified histologically into 3 grades: grade II astrocytoma, grade III anaplastic astrocytoma, and grade IV glioblastoma multiforme. Oligodendrogliomas are diffuse neoplasms closely related to diffuse fibrillary astrocytomas clinically and biologically. However, these tumors generally have better prognoses than diffuse astrocytomas, with mean survival times of 10 years vs 2 to 3 years. Also, oligodendrogliomas apparently are more chemosensitive than astrocytomas. The most aggressive and chemoresistant astrocytoma, glioblastoma multiforme has survival times of less than 2 years for most patients.

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Treatment
Treatment of primary brain tumors begins with surgery with curative intent or optimal tumor debulking, usually followed by radiotherapy and/or chemotherapy. Survival after chemoradiotherapy largely depends on the extent of residual tumor after surgery. Therefore, tumors arising in the midline, basal ganglia, or corpus callosum or those arising in the eloquent speech or motor areas of the cortex have a particularly poor outcome, because they typically cannot be extensively resected. Recurrence is common after surgery for malignant gliomas, even if followed by chemoradiotherapy because the tumors are usually diffusely infiltrating and develop resistance to chemotherapy; also, neurotoxicity limits cumulative doses of whole-brain radiation. Chemotherapy regimens for gliomas usually rely on nitrosourea alkylating agents (carmustine or lomustine), temozolomide, procarbazine, vincristine, and platinum-based agents. The most common regimen combines procarbazine, lomustine, vincristine, and single or multiagent therapy with temozolomide. A biodegradable polymer wafer impregnated with carmustine (Gliadel®‡ Wafer; Guilford Pharmaceuticals) also can be implanted into the surgical cavity as an adjunct to surgery and radiation. It is indicated for newly diagnosed high-grade malignant glioma and for recurrent glioblastoma multiforme.

Brain Metastasis From Other Primary Malignancies
Intracranial metastases are a frequent occurrence seen at autopsy in 10% to 30% of deaths from cancer. Lung cancer is the most common source of brain metastasis (relative prevalence, 48%), followed by breast cancer (15%), unknown primary (12%), melanoma (9%), and colon cancer (5%).

Treatment
Treatment goals in these patients include local control of existing metastases, regional control to prevent the growth of undetected metastases, extending the duration of overall survival, and maintaining quality of life. Surgical resection followed by whole-brain radiotherapy (WBRT) is the mainstay of treatment for patients with 1 to 3 operable brain metastases and with adequate performance status and control of extracranial disease. Resection plus WBRT extends the duration of survival compared with biopsy plus WBRT. Although adding WBRT to resection does not increase the duration of overall survival, it reduces local and distant recurrence of brain metastases. Thus, WBRT decreases the incidence of death from neurologic causes and may help maintain an adequate quality of life, if the cumulative dose does not cause unacceptable neurotoxicity.

Intracavitary Balloon Catheter Brain Brachytherapy
Intracavitary balloon catheter brain brachytherapy is localized temporary high-dose radiotherapy in the brain that requires placement of an inflatable balloon catheter in the surgical cavity, before closing the craniotomy of a resection to remove or debulk a malignant brain mass. A radiation source is then placed in the balloon to expose surrounding brain tissue to radiation, either continuously or in a series of brief treatments. After the patient completes therapy, the radiation source is permanently removed, and the balloon catheter is surgically explanted.

Safety Considerations
Overall, adverse events with GliaSite do not differ greatly from those observed with other brain brachytherapy techniques; however, Adkison et al (2008) reported a case in which linens of a patient with the GliaSite implant were contaminated with radiation. Recovery studies confirmed that systemic absorption is greater than anticipated. Adkison et al concluded that precaution with a Foley catheter should be taken in patients with urinary incontinence. Gerber et al (2007) reported cases of brain hemorrhage have, suggesting the need for careful coagulation control.

FDA or Other Governmental Regulatory Approval

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
In 2001, the GliaSite®‡ Radiation Therapy System (GliaSite RTS; IsoRay Medical) was cleared for marketing by the U.S. FDA through the 510(k) process (K003206). FDA determined that this device was substantially equivalent to separately marketed ventricular reservoirs and catheters, manual radionuclide applicator systems, and radionuclide sources.

In 2011, a modified GliaSite RTS was cleared for marketing by FDA through the 510(k) process (K111931). GliaSite RTS includes a catheter tray with a double balloon catheter and accessories used for implantation of an aqueous saline solution of molecularly bound radioactive iodine (sodium 3 [I-125] iodo-4-hydroxybenzenesulfonate; Iotrex™)‡ as the radiation source; and an access tray with items used for afterloading and retrieving the radioactive material. One to 3 weeks after resection and balloon implantation, the Iotrex solution is loaded through a subcutaneous port and left in for 3 to 6 days. Prescribed radiation doses are usually 40 to 60 gray measured at 0.5 to 1.0 cm from the balloon surface. This procedure has been performed on an inpatient basis.

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In December 2013, CESITRX (Liquid Cesium131 solution) was cleared for marketing by FDA through the 510(k) process (K132996) for use with GliaSite RTS.

In April 2016, IsoRay Medical terminated the supply, manufacture, and distribution of the GliaSite RTS due to poor sales. Other intracavitary balloon brachytherapy systems have also been cleared for marketing by the FDA through the 510(k) process, such as the MammoSite (2004) and Contura (2008) Systems manufactured by Hologic for the treatment of breast cancer.

FDA product code: KXK.

Rationale/Source

Intracavitary balloon catheter brain brachytherapy is an approach to localized radiotherapy using liquid I-125 delivered with an inflatable balloon catheter to treat malignant brain lesions.

For individuals who have primary newly diagnosed or recurrent brain tumors who receive intracavitary balloon catheter brain brachytherapy as an adjunct to resection, the evidence includes early-phase feasibility and dose-ranging studies, case series, and a retrospective review. Relevant outcomes are overall survival, symptoms, and treatment-related morbidity. The evidence is limited by the lack of randomized controlled trials and comparators in nonrandomized studies. The heterogeneity of tumor metastatic tumor types limits the interpretation of reported short-term survival outcomes. Long-term outcome studies have not been reported. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

For individuals who have metastases to the brain from other tumors who receive intracavitary balloon catheter brain brachytherapy as an adjunct to resection, the evidence includes a multicenter, nonrandomized, single-arm study. Relevant outcomes are overall survival, symptoms, and treatment-related morbidity. The evidence is limited by the lack of randomized controlled trials or comparators in nonrandomized studies. The only outcomes data reported have been the local control rates at 1 year. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

Supplemental Information

Practice Guidelines and Position Statements

National Comprehensive Cancer Network

The National Comprehensive Cancer Network guidelines (v.2.2020) for central nervous system cancers does not mention brachytherapy as one of several treatment options used by radiation oncologists.

Congress of Neurological Surgeons

In 2019, the Congress of Neurological Surgeons published updated evidence-based guidelines on the role of emerging and investigational therapies for the treatment of adults with metastatic brain tumors. The guidelines indicate that there is insufficient evidence to support the routine use of existing local therapies such as brachytherapy aside from their use in approved clinical trials.

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Recommendations

Not applicable.

Medicare National Coverage

There is no national coverage determination. In the absence of a national coverage determination, coverage decisions are left to the discretion of local Medicare carriers.

Ongoing and Unpublished Clinical Trials

A search of ClinicalTrials.gov in May 2020 did not identify any ongoing or unpublished trials that would likely influence this review.

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Policy History

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10/02/2014	Medical Policy Committee review
10/15/2014	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. New policy.
01/01/2015	Coding Update
08/03/2015	Coding update: ICD10 Diagnosis code section added; ICD9 Procedure code section removed.
12/03/2015	Medical Policy Committee review
12/16/2015	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. Coverage eligibility unchanged.
12/01/2016	Medical Policy Committee review
12/21/2016	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. Coverage eligibility unchanged.
01/01/2017	Coding update: Removing ICD-9 Diagnosis Codes
12/07/2017	Medical Policy Committee review

Policy # 00434
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12/20/2017	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. Coverage eligibility unchanged.
12/06/2018	Medical Policy Committee review
12/19/2018	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. Coverage eligibility unchanged.
12/05/2019	Medical Policy Committee review
12/11/2019	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. Coverage eligibility unchanged.
12/03/2020	Medical Policy Committee review
12/09/2020	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. Coverage eligibility unchanged.

Next Scheduled Review Date: 12/2021

Coding

The five character codes included in the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana Medical Policy Coverage Guidelines are obtained from Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®)‡, copyright 2019 by the American Medical Association (AMA). CPT is developed by the AMA as a listing of descriptive terms and five character identifying codes and modifiers for reporting medical services and procedures performed by physician.

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CPT is a registered trademark of the American Medical Association.

Codes used to identify services associated with this policy may include (but may not be limited to) the following:

Code Type	Code
CPT	64999, 77316, 77317, 77318, 77761, 77762, 77763, 77770, 77771, 77772, 77799
HCPCS	A9527, C2644
ICD-10 Diagnosis	All related diagnoses

*Investigational – A medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product is Investigational if the effectiveness has not been clearly tested and it has not been incorporated into standard medical practice. Any determination we make that a medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product is Investigational will be based on a consideration of the following:

A. Whether the medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product can be lawfully marketed without approval of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and whether such approval has been granted at the time the medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product is sought to be furnished; or
B. Whether the medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product requires further studies or clinical trials to determine its maximum tolerated dose, toxicity, safety, effectiveness, or effectiveness as compared with the standard means of treatment or diagnosis, must improve health outcomes, according to the consensus of opinion among experts as shown by reliable evidence, including:
    1. Consultation with the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association technology assessment program (TEC) or other nonaffiliated technology evaluation center(s);
    2. Credible scientific evidence published in peer-reviewed medical literature generally recognized by the relevant medical community; or
    3. Reference to federal regulations.

‡ Indicated trademarks are the registered trademarks of their respective owners.

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NOTICE: If the Patient's health insurance contract contains language that differs from the BCBSLA Medical Policy definition noted above, the definition in the health insurance contract will be relied upon for specific coverage determinations.

NOTICE: Medical Policies are scientific based opinions, provided solely for coverage and informational purposes. Medical Policies should not be construed to suggest that the Company recommends, advocates, requires, encourages, or discourages any particular treatment, procedure, or service, or any particular course of treatment, procedure, or service.