

Wyoming EqualityCare Policy for Vagal Nerve Stimulation (VNS) for Epilepsy

Wyoming EqualityCare has instituted the following policy for Vagal Nerve Stimulation for epilepsy. This policy has been adopted in part from Medicare.

Prior authorization is required for all VNS Procedures

Many individuals who have seizures are treated with medications. However, in some cases there are individuals whose seizures cannot be treated with medicine, either because the medicine does not work or because side effects are too severe. Surgery might be an option in some cases, but is not indicated for all people. The vagal nerve stimulation (VNS) system offers an option for individuals in this situation.

VNS is an EqualityCare covered service upon prior approval only for individuals who have been evaluated by a Board Certified Neurologist and meet the following criteria:

1. Have been diagnosed with medically refractory partial onset seizures
2. For whom surgery is not a reasonable option or for whom surgery has failed
3. For whom there are no other treatment options to correct severely intractable epilepsy (to be evaluated on a case by case basis only)

FDA-approval in 1997 limited use of VNS to patients 12 years of age and older. Since then, some trials and studies report results supporting the safety of the device in children with certain types of epilepsy. EqualityCare covers

VNS for individuals age 12 and older. However, consideration will be applied on a case by case basis to individuals who do not meet this age criteria.

Documentation Requirements:

1. Treating provider's statement confirming diagnosis and detailed medical history, including other diagnoses in addition to epilepsy
2. History of methods to improve seizures which have been tried and failed (i.e. medication, surgery)
3. Quality of Life (QOL) Assessment completed by the person who has epilepsy or their legal guardian
4. Other supporting documentation which substantiates the need for VNS versus other treatment methods, as applicable to the patient

Revised by WY EC December 2008