Harvard Pilgrim Health Care | TUFTS Health Plan

Point32Health companies

Payment Policy:

Laboratory: Biomarker Testing for Multiple Sclerosis and Related Neurologic Diseases

Effective date: Nov. 1, 2025

Applies to:

Commercial Products

☒ Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Commercial products
☐ Tufts Health Plan Commercial products

Public Plans Products

☐ Tufts Health Direct – A Massachusetts Qualified Health Plan (QHP) (a commercial product)
☐ Tufts Health Together – MassHealth MCO Plan and Accountable Care Partnership Plans
☐ Tufts Health RITogether – A Rhode Island Medicaid Plan
☐ Tufts Health One Care – A dual-eligible product

Senior Products

☐ Tufts Health Plan Senior Care Options (SCO) (a dual-eligible product)
☐ Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO/PPO (Medicare Advantage products)

Policy

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is the most common immune-mediated inflammatory demyelinating disease of the central nervous system (CNS) and is defined by multifocal areas of demyelination with loss of oligodendrocytes and astroglial scarring. The most commonly present symptom is sensory disturbances, followed by weakness and visual disturbances. However, the disease has a highly variable pace and many atypical forms. Besides MS, acute CNS demyelination also occurs in acute disseminated encephalomyelitis (ADEM), optic neuritis, transverse myelitis, and neuromyelitis optica.

Neuromyelitis optica and neuromyelitis optica spectrum disorders (NMOSD) are inflammatory disorders of the CNS characterized by severe, immune-mediated demyelination and axonal damage predominantly targeting the optic nerves and spinal cord. Previously considered a subset of MS, this set of disorders is now recognized as its own clinical entity with its own unique immunologic features.

Indications and/or Limitations of Coverage

Application of coverage criteria is dependent upon an individual's benefit coverage at the time of the request.

1. For the diagnosis of multiple sclerosis (MS), cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) and serum oligoclonal band analysis **MEETS COVERAGE CRITERIA** in any of the following situations:
   a. For individuals with atypical clinical, laboratory, or imaging features.
   b. For individuals with an atypical, clinically isolated syndrome, including, but not limited to, primary progressive multiple sclerosis or relapsing-remitting course.
   c. For individuals belonging to a population in which MS is less common (e.g., children, older individuals).
   d. For individuals with insufficient clinical or imaging evidence for diagnosis.
2. In cases of suspected neuromyelitis optica spectrum disorders (NMOSD) or myelin oligodendrocyte glycoprotein-immunoglobulin G (MOG-IgG)-associated encephalomyelitis (MOG-EM), serum indirect fluorescence assay or fluorescence-activated cell sorting (FACS) assay of aquaporin-4-IgG (AQP4-IgG) and MOG-IgG **MEET COVERAGE CRITERIA** when all of the following conditions are met:
   a. The individual has monophasic or relapsing acute optic neuritis, myelitis, brainstem encephalitis, encephalitis, or any combination thereof;
   b. The individuals have radiological or electrophysiological findings compatible with central nervous system (CNS) demyelination;
   c. The individual has at least one of the following:
      i. Belongs to a higher risk population (e.g., pediatric).

ii. Has an abnormal MRI depicting extensive optic nerve lesion, extensive spinal cord lesion or atrophy, or large confluent T2 brain lesions.
iii. Has prominent papilledema/papillitis/optic disc swelling during acute optic neuritis.
iv. Has neutrophilic CSF pleocytosis.
v. Has a histopathology finding of primary demyelination with intralesional complement and IgG deposits or has a previous diagnosis of “pattern II MS”.
vi. Has simultaneous bilateral acute optic neuritis.
vii. Has a severe visual deficit or blindness in one or both eyes during or after acute optic neuritis.
viii. Has severe or frequent episodes of acute myelitis or brainstem encephalitis.
ix. Has permanent sphincter and/or erectile disorder after myelitis.
x. Has a previous diagnosis of acute disseminated encephalomyelitis (ADEM).

The following does not meet coverage criteria due to a lack of available published scientific literature confirming that the test(s) is/are required and beneficial for the diagnosis and treatment of an individual’s illness.

3. In all other situations, serum biomarker tests for multiple sclerosis **DO NOT MEET COVERAGE CRITERIA**.
4. ELISA, Western blot, immunohistochemistry, or any other serum assays to test for NMOSD or MOG-EM **DO NOT MEET COVERAGE CRITERIA**.
5. For the diagnosis of MS, NMOSD, or MOG-EM, all other cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) biomarker tests, including AQP4-IgG or MOG-IgG, **DO NOT MEET COVERAGE CRITERIA**.

Applicable CPT/HCPCS Procedure Codes

Procedure codes appearing in policy documents are included only as a general reference tool for each policy. They may not be all-inclusive.

Coding

Code	Description
83520	Immunoassay for analyte other than infectious agent antibody or infectious agent antigen; quantitative, not otherwise specified
83884	Neurofilament light chain (NfL)
83916	Oligoclonal immune (oligoclonal bands)
84182	Protein: Western Blot, with interpretation and report, blood or other body fluid, immunological probe for band identification, each
86051	Aquaporin-4 (neuromyelitis optica [NMO]) antibody; enzyme-linked immunosorbent immunoassay (ELISA)
86052	Aquaporin-4 (neuromyelitis optica [NMO]) antibody; cell-based immunofluorescence assay (CBA), each
86053	Aquaporin-4 (neuromyelitis optica [NMO]) antibody; flow cytometry (i.e., fluorescence-activated cell sorting [FACS]), each
86362	Myelin oligodendrocyte glycoprotein (MOG-IgG1) antibody; cell-based immunofluorescence assay (CBA), each
86363	Myelin oligodendrocyte glycoprotein (MOG-IgG1) antibody; flow cytometry (i.e., fluorescence-activated cell sorting [FACS]), each
88341	Immunohistochemistry or immunocytochemistry, per specimen; each additional single antibody stain procedure (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
88342	Immunohistochemistry or immunocytochemistry, per specimen; initial single antibody stain procedure
0443U	Neurofilament light chain (NfL), ultra-sensitive immunoassay, serum or cerebrospinal fluid Proprietary test: Neurofilament Light Chain (NfL) Lab/Manufacturer: Neuromuscular Clinical Laboratory at Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine, Neuromuscular Clinical Laboratory at Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine

Evidence-based Scientific References

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Publication History

03/01/2026: Annual review; administrative edits; removed serum from policy title
09/01/2025: Policy created to support coverage guidelines, effective for dates of service beginning Nov. 1, 2025

Background and Disclaimer Information

This policy applies to the products of Harvard Pilgrim Health Care and Tufts Health Plan and their affiliates, as identified in the check boxes on the first page for services performed by contracted providers.

Payment is based on member benefits and eligibility on the date of service, medical necessity review, where applicable, and the provider's network participation agreement with the Plan. As every claim is unique, this policy is neither a guarantee of payment, nor a final indication of how specific claim(s) will be adjudicated. Claims payment is subject to member eligibility and benefits on the date of service, coordination of benefits, referral/authorization, and utilization management requirements (when applicable), adherence to Plan policies and procedures, and claims editing logic. An authorization is not a guarantee of payment.

Point32Health reserves the right to amend a payment policy at its discretion. CPT and HCPCS codes are updated as applicable; please adhere to the most recent CPT and HCPCS coding guidelines.

We reserve the right to conduct audits on any provider and/or facility to ensure accuracy and compliance with the guidelines stated in this payment policy. If such an audit determines that a provider/facility did not comply with this payment policy, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care and Tufts Health Plan will expect the provider/facility to refund all payments related to noncompliance.