Harvard Pilgrim Health Care | TUFTS Health Plan

Pharmacy Medical Necessity Guidelines:

Nuedexta (dextromethorphan / quinidine)

Effective: January 13, 2026

Guideline Type	☒ Prior Authorization ☐ Non-Formulary ☐ Step-Therapy ☐ Administrative

Applies to:

Commercial Products

☒ Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Commercial products; Fax: 617-673-0988

☒ Tufts Health Plan Commercial products; Fax: 617-673-0988

CareLink℠ – Refer to CareLink Procedures, Services and Items Requiring Prior Authorization

Public Plans Products

☒ Tufts Health Direct – A Massachusetts Qualified Health Plan (QHP) (a commercial product); Fax: 617-673-0988

Note: While you may not be the provider responsible for obtaining prior authorization, as a condition of payment you will need to ensure that prior authorization has been obtained.

Overview

Food and Drug Administration – Approved Indications

Nuedexta (dextromethorphan/quinidine) is indicated for the treatment of pseudobulbar affect (PBA). PBA occurs secondary to a variety of otherwise unrelated neurological conditions, and is characterized by involuntary, sudden, and frequent episodes of laughing and/or crying. PBA episodes typically occur out of proportion or incongruent to the patient's underlying emotional state.

Clinical Guideline Coverage Criteria

The plan may authorize coverage of **Nuedexta (dextromethorphan/quinidine)** for patients when all of the following criteria are met:

1. Documented diagnosis of pseudobulbar affect

Limitations

- Samples, free goods, or similar offerings of the requested medication do not qualify for an established clinical response or exception but will be considered on an individual basis for prior authorization.

Codes

None

References

1. Colamonico J, Formella A, Bradley W. Pseudobulbar Affect: burden of illness in the U.S.A. Adv. Ther. 2012 Sep;29(9):775-98. doi: 10.1007/s12325-012-0043-7. Epub 2012 Aug 30.
2. No authors listed. Dextromethorphan/quinidine (Nuedexta) for pseudobulbar affect. Med Lett Drugs Ther. 2011 Jul 11;53(1366):46-7.
3. Nuedexta (dextromethorphan/quinidine) [package insert]. Aliso Viejo, CA: Avanir Pharmaceuticals, Inc; June 2019.

Approval And Revision History

December 13, 2022: Reviewed by the Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee.

Subsequent endorsement date(s) and changes made:

- August 8, 2023: No change
- November 12, 2024: No change
- January 13, 2026: No change

Background, Product and Disclaimer Information

Pharmacy Medical Necessity Guidelines have been developed for determining coverage for plan benefits and are published to provide a better understanding of the basis upon which coverage decisions are made. The plan makes coverage decisions on a

case-by-case basis considering the individual member's health care needs. Pharmacy Medical Necessity Guidelines are developed for selected therapeutic classes or drugs found to be safe, but proven to be effective in a limited, defined population of patients or clinical circumstances. They include concise clinical coverage criteria based on current literature review, consultation with practicing physicians in the service area who are medical experts in the particular field, FDA and other government agency policies, and standards adopted by national accreditation organizations. The plan revises and updates Pharmacy Medical Necessity Guidelines annually, or more frequently if new evidence becomes available that suggests needed revisions.

For self-insured plans, coverage may vary depending on the terms of the benefit document. If a discrepancy exists between a Pharmacy Medical Necessity Guideline and a self-insured Member’s benefit document, the provisions of the benefit document will govern.

Treating providers are solely responsible for the medical advice and treatment of members. The use of this policy is not a guarantee of payment or a final prediction 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 guidelines when applicable, and adherence to plan policies and procedures and claims editing logic.