

Clinical Policy: Topotecan (Hycamtin)

Reference Number: CP.PHAR.64

Effective Date: 06.01.11

Last Review Date: 05.26

Line of Business: Commercial, HIM/ICHRA, Medicaid

[Coding Implications](#)

[Revision Log](#)

See [Important Reminder](#) at the end of this policy for important regulatory and legal information.

Description

Topotecan (Hycamtin[®]) is a topoisomerase inhibitor.

FDA Approved Indication(s)

Hycamtin capsules are indicated for the treatment of relapsed small cell lung cancer in patients with a prior complete or partial response and who are at least 45 days from the end of first-line chemotherapy.

Hycamtin for injection is indicated:

- As a single agent for the treatment of patients with metastatic ovarian cancer after disease progression on or after initial or subsequent chemotherapy;
- As a single agent for the treatment of patients with small cell lung cancer with platinum-sensitive disease who progressed at least 60 days after initiation of first-line chemotherapy;
- In combination with cisplatin for the treatment of patients with Stage IV-B, recurrent, or persistent carcinoma of the cervix not amenable to curative treatment.

Policy/Criteria

Provider must submit documentation (such as office chart notes, lab results or other clinical information) supporting that member has met all approval criteria.

It is the policy of health plans affiliated with Centene Corporation[®] that topotecan and Hycamtin are **medically necessary** when the following criteria are met:

I. Initial Approval Criteria

A. Ovarian Cancer (must meet all):

1. Diagnosis of ovarian cancer (including serous epithelial carcinoma, mucinous neoplasms, clear cell carcinoma, endometrioid carcinoma, low-grade serous carcinoma, and carcinosarcoma), fallopian tube cancer, or primary peritoneal cancer;
2. Request is for topotecan for injection;
3. Prescribed by or in consultation with an oncologist;
4. Age \geq 18 years;
5. Disease progression on or after initial or subsequent chemotherapy (*see Appendix B*);
6. Prescribed in one of the following ways (a or b):
 - a. As a single agent;
 - b. In combination with bevacizumab or sorafenib (off-label);
7. For Hycamtin injection requests, member must use generic topotecan, unless contraindicated or clinically significant adverse effects are experienced;

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8. Request meets one of the following (a or b):*
 - a. Dose does not exceed 1.5 mg/m² per day for 5 consecutive days every 21 days;
 - b. Dose is supported by practice guidelines or peer-reviewed literature for the relevant off-label use (*prescriber must submit supporting evidence*).

**Prescribed regimen must be FDA-approved or recommended by NCCN*

Approval duration:

Medicaid/HIM/ICHRA– 12 months

Commercial – 6 months or to the member’s renewal date, whichever is longer

B. Small Cell Lung Cancer (must meet all):

1. Diagnosis of small cell lung cancer;
2. Prescribed by or in consultation with an oncologist;
3. Age ≥ 18 years;
4. Member has received prior chemotherapy (*see Appendix B*);
5. For Hycamtin requests, member must use generic topotecan if available, unless contraindicated or clinically significant adverse effects are experienced;
6. Request meets one of the following (a or b):*
 - a. Dose does not exceed the following:
 - i. Injection: 1.5 mg/m² per day IV for 5 consecutive days every 21 days;
 - ii. Capsule: 2.3 mg/m² per day orally for 5 consecutive days every 21 days;
 - b. Dose is supported by practice guidelines or peer-reviewed literature for the relevant off-label use (*prescriber must submit supporting evidence*).

**Prescribed regimen must be FDA-approved or recommended by NCCN*

Approval duration:

Medicaid/HIM/ICHRA– 12 months

Commercial – 6 months or to the member’s renewal date, whichever is longer (injection); 12 months or duration of request, whichever is less (capsule)

C. Cervical Cancer (must meet all):

1. Diagnosis of cervical cancer;
2. Request is for topotecan for injection;
3. Prescribed by or in consultation with an oncologist;
4. Age ≥ 18 years;
5. Prescribed in one of the following ways (a or b):
 - a. In combination with cisplatin or paclitaxel;
 - b. As a single agent as second-line or subsequent therapy;
6. For Hycamtin injection requests, member must use generic topotecan, unless contraindicated or clinically significant adverse effects are experienced;
7. Request meets one of the following (a or b):*
 - a. Dose does not exceed 0.75 mg/m² per day on days 1-3 every 21 days;
 - b. Dose is supported by practice guidelines or peer-reviewed literature for the relevant off-label use (*prescriber must submit supporting evidence*).

**Prescribed regimen must be FDA-approved or recommended by NCCN*

Approval duration:

Medicaid/HIM/ICHRA– 12 months

Commercial – 6 months or to the member’s renewal date, whichever is longer

D. Off-Label NCCN Compendium Recommended Indications (must meet all):

1. Request meets one of the following (a or b):
 - a. Request is for topotecan for injection and one of the following diagnoses (i –viii):
 - i. Ewing sarcoma, and prescribed as a second line therapy in combination with cyclophosphamide;
 - ii. Osteosarcoma, and prescribed as a second line therapy in combination with cyclophosphamide;
 - iii. Leptomeningeal metastases, and route of administration is intrathecal;
 - iv. Non-pleomorphic rhabdomyosarcoma, and prescribed as a single agent or in combination with cyclophosphamide;
 - v. Endometrial carcinoma as second-line or subsequent therapy, and prescribed as a single agent;
 - vi. Neuroblastoma in combination with cyclophosphamide;
 - vii. Pediatric medulloblastoma, and prescribed in combination with temozolomide;
 - viii. Vaginal cancer, and prescribed as a single agent or in combination with paclitaxel or cisplatin;
 - b. Diagnosis of Merkel cell carcinoma, and has progressed on checkpoint immunotherapy (e.g., Bavencio[®], Keytruda[®], Opdivo[®]), unless member is contraindicated);
2. Prescribed by or in consultation with an oncologist;
3. Age ≥ 18 years (all indications except for pediatric medulloblastoma);
4. For Hycamtin requests, member must use generic topotecan if available, unless contraindicated or clinically significant adverse effects are experienced;
5. Dose is within FDA maximum limit for any FDA approved indication or is supported by practice guidelines or peer-reviewed literature for the relevant off-label use (*prescriber must submit supporting evidence*).*

**Prescribed regimen must be FDA-approved or recommended by NCCN*

Approval duration:

Medicaid/HIM/ICHRA– 12 months

Commercial – 6 months or to the member’s renewal date, whichever is longer (injection); 12 months or duration of request, whichever is less (capsule).

E. Other diagnoses/indications (must meet 1 or 2):

1. If this drug has recently (within the last 6 months) undergone a label change (e.g., newly approved indication, age expansion, new dosing regimen) that is not yet reflected in this policy, refer to one of the following policies (a or b):
 - a. For drugs on the formulary (commercial, health insurance marketplace/ICHRA) or PDL (Medicaid), the no coverage criteria policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.190 for commercial, HIM.PA.33 for health insurance marketplace/ICHRA, and CP.PMN.255 for Medicaid; or
 - b. For drugs NOT on the formulary (commercial, health insurance marketplace/ICHRA) or PDL (Medicaid), the non-formulary policy for the

- relevant line of business: CP.CPA.190 for commercial, HIM.PA.103 for health insurance marketplace/ICHRA, and CP.PMN.16 for Medicaid; or
2. If the requested use (e.g., diagnosis, age, dosing regimen) is NOT specifically listed under section III (Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is NOT authorized) AND criterion 1 above does not apply, refer to the off-label use policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.09 for commercial, HIM.PA.154 for health insurance marketplace/ICHRA, and CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid.

II. Continued Therapy

A. All Indications in Section I (must meet all):

1. Currently receiving medication via Centene benefit, or documentation supports that member is currently receiving topotecan for a covered indication and has received this medication for at least 30 days;
2. Member is responding positively to therapy;
3. For Hycamtin requests, member must use generic topotecan if available, unless contraindicated or clinically significant adverse effects are experienced;
4. If request is for a dose increase, request meets one of the following (a or b):*
 - a. New dose does not exceed the following (i, ii, or iii):
 - i. Ovarian cancer: 1.5 mg/m² per day IV for 5 consecutive days every 21 days;
 - ii. Small cell lung cancer: 1.5 mg/m² per day IV *or* 2.3 mg/m²/day orally for 5 consecutive days repeated every 21 days;
 - iii. Cervical cancer: 0.75 mg/m² per day IV on days 1-3 every 21 days;
 - b. New dose is supported by practice guidelines or peer-reviewed literature for the relevant off-label use (*prescriber must submit supporting evidence*).

**Prescribed regimen must be FDA-approved or recommended by NCCN*

Approval duration:

Medicaid/HIM/ICHRA– 12 months

Commercial – 6 months or to the member’s renewal date, whichever is longer (injection); 12 months or duration of request, whichever is less (capsule)

B. Other diagnoses/indications (must meet 1 or 2):

1. If this drug has recently (within the last 6 months) undergone a label change (e.g., newly approved indication, age expansion, new dosing regimen) that is not yet reflected in this policy, refer to one of the following policies (a or b):
 - a. For drugs on the formulary (commercial, health insurance marketplace/ICHRA) or PDL (Medicaid), the no coverage criteria policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.190 for commercial, HIM.PA.33 for health insurance marketplace/ICHRA, and CP.PMN.255 for Medicaid; or
 - b. For drugs NOT on the formulary (commercial, health insurance marketplace/ICHRA) or PDL (Medicaid), the non-formulary policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.190 for commercial, HIM.PA.103 for health insurance marketplace/ICHRA, and CP.PMN.16 for Medicaid; or
2. If the requested use (e.g., diagnosis, age, dosing regimen) is NOT specifically listed under section III (Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is NOT authorized) AND criterion 1 above does not apply, refer to the off-label use policy for the relevant line

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of business: CP.CPA.09 for commercial, HIM.PA.154 for health insurance marketplace/ICHRA, and CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid.

III. Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is NOT authorized:

- A. Non-FDA approved indications, which are not addressed in this policy, unless there is sufficient documentation of efficacy and safety according to the off label use policy – CP.CPA.09 for commercial, HIM.PA.154 for health insurance marketplace/ICHRA and CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid, or evidence of coverage documents.

IV. Appendices/General Information

Appendix A: Abbreviation/Acronym Key

FDA: Food and Drug Administration

NCCN: National Comprehensive Cancer Network

Appendix B: Therapeutic Alternatives

This table provides a listing of preferred alternative therapy recommended in the approval criteria. The drugs listed here may not be a formulary agent for all relevant lines of business and may require prior authorization.

Drug Name	Dosing Regimen	Dose Limit/ Maximum Dose
Examples* of therapies for ovarian cancer: paclitaxel, carboplatin, cisplatin, doxorubicin, ifosfamide, bevacizumab	Varies	Varies
Examples* of therapies for small cell lung cancer: cisplatin, carboplatin, etoposide, atezolizumab, durvalumab, irinotecan	Varies	Varies
Examples* of therapies for cervical cancer: cisplatin, carboplatin, pembrolizumab, bevacizumab, nivolumab, paclitaxel, docetaxel, fluorouracil, gemcitabine, ifosfamide, irinotecan, mitomycin, pemetrexed, vinorelbine, tisotumab vedotin-tftv	Varies	Varies
Examples* of therapies for Ewing sarcoma and osteosarcoma: pembrolizumab, dasatinib, pazopanib, ivosidenib	Varies	Varies

Therapeutic alternatives are listed as Brand name® (generic) when the drug is available by brand name only and generic (Brand name®) when the drug is available by both brand and generic.

**Examples are not all-inclusive and may be used alone or in various combination regimens; refer to NCCN guidelines for additional detail*

Appendix C: Contraindications/Boxed Warnings

- Contraindication(s): history of severe hypersensitivity reactions to topotecan
- Boxed warning(s): myelosuppression

V. Dosage and Administration

Indication	Dosing Regimen	Maximum Dose
Ovarian cancer	IV infusion dosage: 1.5 mg/m ² IV over 30 minutes daily for 5 consecutive days, starting on Day 1 of a 21-day course	4 mg/dose if IV infusion, otherwise refer to regimen
Small cell lung cancer	IV infusion dosage: 1.5 mg/m ² IV over 30 minutes daily for 5 consecutive days, starting on Day 1 of a 21-day course Oral dosage: 2.3 mg/m ² /day orally once daily for 5 consecutive days repeated every 21 days	4 mg/dose if IV infusion, otherwise refer to regimen
Cervical cancer	IV infusion dosage: 0.75 mg/m ² IV over 30 minutes daily on Days 1, 2, and 3 repeated every 21 days in combination with cisplatin 50 mg/m ² on Day 1	4 mg/dose if IV infusion, otherwise refer to regimen

VI. Product Availability

- Capsules: 0.25 mg, 1 mg
- Lyophilized powder in single use vial for injection: 4-mg (free base)

VII. References

1. Hycamtin for Injection Prescribing Information. East Hanover, NJ: Novartis; October 2019. Available at: https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2019/020671s024lbl.pdf. Accessed February 2, 2026.
2. Hycamtin capsules Prescribing Information. East Hanover, NJ: Novartis; September 2018. Available at: https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2018/020981s008lbl.pdf. Accessed February 2, 2026.
3. National Comprehensive Cancer Network Drugs and Biologics Compendium. Available at nccn.org. Accessed February 2, 2026.
4. National Comprehensive Cancer Network. Ovarian Cancer/Fallopian Tube Cancer/Primary Peritoneal Cancer Version 3.2025. Available at: https://www.nccn.org/professionals/physician_gls/pdf/ovarian.pdf. Accessed February 2, 2026.
5. National Comprehensive Cancer Network. Small Cell Lung Cancer Version 2.2026. Available at: https://www.nccn.org/professionals/physician_gls/pdf/sclc.pdf. Accessed February 2, 2026.
6. National Comprehensive Cancer Network. Cervical Cancer Version 2.2026. Available at: https://www.nccn.org/professionals/physician_gls/pdf/cervical.pdf. Accessed February 2, 2026.

Coding Implications

Codes referenced in this clinical policy are for informational purposes only. Inclusion or exclusion of any codes does not guarantee coverage. Providers should reference the most up-to-date sources of professional coding guidance prior to the submission of claims for reimbursement of covered services.

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HCPCS Codes	Description
J8705	Topotecan, oral, 0.25 mg
J9351	Injection, topotecan, 0.1 mg

Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals	Date	P&T Approval Date
2Q 2022 annual review: revisions made per FDA label and/or NCCN recommendations – for ovarian cancer, expanded coverable diagnoses to include additional types of ovarian cancer as well as fallopian tube and primary peritoneal cancer and added requirement for use as a single agent or in combination with bevacizumab or sorafenib; for cervical cancer, added requirement for use in combination with cisplatin or paclitaxel, or as a single agent as second-line or subsequent therapy; for off-label uses, removed primary CNS lymphoma and added specific requirements for use in Ewing sarcoma, osteosarcoma, endometrial sarcoma, and rhabdomyosarcoma; modified Commercial approval duration for capsules from “Length of Benefit” to “12 months or duration of request, whichever is less”; references reviewed and updated.	01.28.22	05.22
Template changes applied to other diagnoses/indications.	10.12.22	
2Q 2023 annual review: updated off-label criteria for endometrial carcinoma to include “as second line or subsequent therapy” per NCCN compendium; references reviewed and updated.	02.07.23	05.23
2Q 2024 annual review: for ovarian cancer, revised mucinous carcinoma to mucinous neoplasms per NCCN guideline revisions; for off-label NCCN recommendations, added neuroblastoma indication per NCCN, revised merkel cell carcinoma to include progression of disease on checkpoint immunotherapy per NCCN; for all indications, added redirection to generic topotecan if available; references reviewed and updated.	02.08.24	05.24
2Q 2025 annual review: for off-label NCCN recommendations, added pediatric medulloblastoma and vaginal cancer criteria; references reviewed and updated.	01.28.25	05.25
2Q 2026 annual review: for all indications, extended Medicaid and HIM initial approval duration from 6 months to 12 months for this maintenance medication for a chronic condition; for off-label NCCN recommendations, revised neuroblastoma to include non-induction therapy; references reviewed and updated. Added ICHRA line of business.	03.31.26	05.26

Important Reminder

This clinical policy has been developed by appropriately experienced and licensed health care professionals based on a review and consideration of currently available generally accepted

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standards of medical practice; peer-reviewed medical literature; government agency/program approval status; evidence-based guidelines and positions of leading national health professional organizations; views of physicians practicing in relevant clinical areas affected by this clinical policy; and other available clinical information. The Health Plan makes no representations and accepts no liability with respect to the content of any external information used or relied upon in developing this clinical policy. This clinical policy is consistent with standards of medical practice current at the time that this clinical policy was approved. “Health Plan” means a health plan that has adopted this clinical policy and that is operated or administered, in whole or in part, by Centene Management Company, LLC, or any of such health plan’s affiliates, as applicable.

The purpose of this clinical policy is to provide a guide to medical necessity, which is a component of the guidelines used to assist in making coverage decisions and administering benefits. It does not constitute a contract or guarantee regarding payment or results. Coverage decisions and the administration of benefits are subject to all terms, conditions, exclusions, and limitations of the coverage documents (e.g., evidence of coverage, certificate of coverage, policy, contract of insurance, etc.), as well as to state and federal requirements and applicable Health Plan-level administrative policies and procedures.

This clinical policy is effective as of the date determined by the Health Plan. The date of posting may not be the effective date of this clinical policy. This clinical policy may be subject to applicable legal and regulatory requirements relating to provider notification. If there is a discrepancy between the effective date of this clinical policy and any applicable legal or regulatory requirement, the requirements of law and regulation shall govern. The Health Plan retains the right to change, amend or withdraw this clinical policy, and additional clinical policies may be developed and adopted as needed, at any time.

This clinical policy does not constitute medical advice, medical treatment, or medical care. It is not intended to dictate to providers how to practice medicine. Providers are expected to exercise professional medical judgment in providing the most appropriate care, and are solely responsible for the medical advice and treatment of members. This clinical policy is not intended to recommend treatment for members. Members should consult with their treating physician in connection with diagnosis and treatment decisions.

Providers referred to in this clinical policy are independent contractors who exercise independent judgment and over whom the Health Plan has no control or right of control. Providers are not agents or employees of the Health Plan.

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Note: For Medicaid members, when state Medicaid coverage provisions conflict with the coverage provisions in this clinical policy, state Medicaid coverage provisions take precedence. Please refer to the state Medicaid manual for any coverage provisions pertaining to this clinical policy.

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