

# Clinical Policy: Pancreas Transplantation

Reference Number: NC.CP.MP.102

Last Review Date: 04/21

[Coding Implications](#)

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## Description

This policy describes the medical necessity requirements for pancreas transplantation procedures. Multiple types of pancreas transplants are effective therapeutic options for arresting the progression of the complications of diabetes mellitus, and improving the quality of life for diabetic patients, including: simultaneous pancreas kidney transplant (SPK), pancreas after kidney transplant (PAK), pancreas transplant alone (PTA), and islet cell transplant. The SPK procedure is most commonly performed transplant procedure, and has the highest post-operative graft survival rates.

## Policy/Criteria

- I. It is the policy of Carolina Complete Health that a pancreas transplant is **medically necessary** when meeting all of the following:
  - A. Severely disabling and potentially life-threatening complications due to hypoglycemic unawareness and labile insulin-dependent diabetes (Type I DM ) that persists in spite of optimal medical management;
  - B. Does not have ANY of the following contraindications:
    1. Active, potentially life-threatening, malignancy (except when transplant is done for a cure);
    2. Untreatable significant dysfunction of another major organ system, unless combined organ transplantation can be performed;
    3. Acute medical instability, including, but not limited to, acute sepsis or myocardial infarction;
    4. Uncorrectable bleeding diathesis;
    5. Chronic infection with highly virulent and/or resistant microbes that are poorly controlled pre-transplant;
    6. Current non-adherence to medical therapy or a history of repeated or prolonged episodes of non-adherence to medical therapy that are perceived to increase the risk of non-adherence after transplantation;
    7. Psychiatric or psychological condition associated with the inability to cooperate or comply with medical therapy;
    8. Absence of an adequate or reliable social support system;
    9. Severely limited functional status with poor rehabilitation potential;

Substance abuse or dependence (including tobacco and alcohol) without convincing evidence of risk reduction behaviors, such as meaningful and/or long-term participation in therapy for substance abuse and/or dependence. Serial blood and urine testing may be used to verify abstinence from substances that are of concern.

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- C. Request is for one of the following procedures and meets the corresponding criteria:
1. *PTA*, meets all:
    - a. Recurrent, severe, and potentially life-threatening metabolic complications that require medical attention, as documented by chart notes, emergency room visits, or hospitalizations, including any of the following: i. Severe hypoglycemia unawareness; ii. Marked hyperglycemia; iii. Recurring severe ketoacidosis;
    - b. Clinical and emotional problems with exogenous insulin therapy that are so severe as to be incapacitating or consistent failure of insulin based management to prevent acute complications;
  2. *SPK* with end-stage renal disease (ESRD), as evidenced by uremia;
  3. *PAK transplant*, meets all:
    - a. Underwent successful kidney transplant without significant chronic rejection of kidney transplant;
    - b. Stable kidney transplant function, as defined by both:
      - i. Stable creatinine clearance  $\geq$  30 mL/min,
      - ii. Absence of significant proteinuria.

**II.** It is the policy of health plans affiliated with Centene Corporation that *autologous islet cell transplants* are considered **medically necessary** as an adjunct procedure to a total or near total pancreatectomy for severe, refractory pancreatitis.

**III.** It is the policy of health plans affiliated with Centene Corporation that *pancreas re-transplantation* are considered **medically necessary** after one failed primary pancreas transplant.

- IV.** It is the policy of health plans affiliated with Centene Corporation that pancreas transplant procedures are considered **experimental/investigational** for any of the following indications:
- A.** Re-transplantations after two or more failed primary pancreas transplantations;
  - B.** Allogeneic islet cell transplantation or xenotransplantation;
  - C.** SPK transplantation for patients with amputation due to peripheral obstructive vascular disease;
  - D.** For the treatment of all other conditions than those specified above.

**Background**

The American Diabetes Association defines diabetes mellitus as a group of metabolic diseases, which is characterized by hyperglycemia that results from defects in insulin secretion, insulin action, or both.<sup>1</sup> According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s estimations in 2012, approximately 29.1 million people or 9.3% of the U.S. population have diabetes, with an approximate 8.1 million undiagnosed cases.<sup>3</sup> The chronic hyperglycemia existing in diabetic patients facilitates long term organ damage, especially to the eyes, kidneys, nerves, and blood vessels.<sup>1</sup>

The prevalent type 2 diabetes is caused by a resistance to insulin action and an inadequate compensatory insulin secretory response.<sup>1</sup> Type 1 diabetes is caused by immune mediated destruction of the insulin secreting pancreatic  $\beta$  cells.<sup>2</sup> Islet cell autoantibodies, insulin autoantibodies, autoantibodies to glutamic acid decarboxylase, zinc transporter 8 (ZnT8A), and

autoantibodies to the tyrosine phosphatase IA-2 and IA-2 $\beta$  are serological markers of the pancreatic  $\beta$  cell destruction observed in type 1 diabetes.<sup>1,2,4</sup>

Due to the loss of glucose homeostasis in diabetes mellitus and the dependency of exogenous insulin for glycemic control, pancreatic transplantations presents options to restore glucose regulated endogenous insulin secretion, arrest the progression of the complications of diabetes, and to improve the quality of life for diabetic patients.<sup>5</sup> In fact, pancreas transplantation is the only proven method to restore normoglycemia in type 1 diabetic patients.

There are multiple iterations of pancreas transplantation procedures available to diabetic patients: simultaneous pancreas kidney transplant (SPK), pancreas after kidney transplant (PAK), and pancreas transplant alone (PTA), as well as islet cell transplantation. SPK, performed for patients with type 1 diabetes with end stage renal disease, is the most common pancreas transplant procedure.<sup>6</sup> A comprehensive analysis of the 35,000 pancreas transplantations reported to the International Pancreas Transplant Registry as of 2010, 75% of the procedures are SPK, 18% are PAK transplant, and 9% are PTA.<sup>6</sup>

Patient survival rates were reported at > 95% at 1 year and > 83% at 5 years.<sup>6</sup> The best graft survival rates were observed in SPK transplants at 86% for pancreas and 93% for kidney at one year; PAK procedures displayed graft function at 80%, while PTA had graft function at 78%.<sup>6</sup> Graft survival rate is defined as total freedom from insulin therapy, normal fasting blood glucose concentrations, and normal or only slightly elevated HbA1c values.<sup>8</sup> Patient survival rates were 95 to 98% at one year, 91 to 92 % at 3 years and 78 to 88% at 5 years post operatively.<sup>5</sup> In all three categories, cardio/cerebrovascular problems as well as infections were the leading cause of early and late death.<sup>6</sup>

Patients undergoing the pancreas transplantation, especially the SPK procedure, require extensive immunosuppression regimens; pancreas transplants recipients are believed to require higher levels of immunosuppression than other solid organ transplants, possibly related to the immunogenicity of the pancreas, and or the autoimmune status of the recipients.<sup>7</sup>

Pancreatic islet autotransplantation is performed following a pancreatectomy in patients with severe chronic pancreatitis. Islet  $\beta$  cells transferred into the liver through the portal vein of the recipient.<sup>5</sup> One of the primary symptoms and complications observed in patients with chronic pancreatitis is excessive pain. Therefore control of pain is a primary goal of pancreatectomy and pancreatic islet autotransplantation. Post-operative opiate usage has been reported as an outcome metric for pain relief, and reductions ranging from approximately 20-80% have been reported due to pancreatic islet autotransplantation.<sup>8</sup>

### **Coding Implications**

This clinical policy references Current Procedural Terminology (CPT<sup>®</sup>). CPT<sup>®</sup> is a registered trademark of the American Medical Association. All CPT codes and descriptions are copyrighted 2019, American Medical Association. All rights reserved. CPT codes and CPT descriptions are from the current manuals and those included herein are not intended to be all-inclusive and are included for informational purposes only. Codes referenced in this clinical policy are for informational purposes only. Inclusion or exclusion of any codes does not

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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.

CPT®* Codes	Description
48160	Pancreatectomy, total or subtotal, with autologous transplantation of pancreas of pancreatic islet cells
48550	Donor pancreatectomy (including cold preservation), with or without duodenal segment for transplantation
48551	Backbench standard preparation of cadaver donor pancreas allograft prior to transplantation, including dissection of allograft from surrounding soft tissues, splenectomy, duodenotomy, ligation of bile duct, ligation of mesenteric vessels, and Y-graft arterial anastomoses from iliac artery to superior mesenteric artery and to splenic artery
48552	Backbench reconstruction of cadaver donor pancreas allograft prior to transplantation, venous anastomosis, each
48554	Transplantation of pancreatic allograft
48556	Removal of transplanted pancreatic allograft
50300	Donor nephrectomy (including cold preservation) from cadaver donor, unilateral or bilateral
50320	Donor nephrectomy (including cold preservation); open, from living donor
50323	Backbench standard preparation of cadaver donor renal allograft prior to transplantation, including dissection and removal of perinephric fat, diaphragmatic and retroperitoneal attachments, excision of adrenal gland, and preparation of ureter(s), renal vein(s), and renal artery(s), ligating branches, as necessary
50325	Backbench standard preparation of living donor renal allograft (open or laparoscopic) prior to transplantation, including dissection and removal of perinephric fat and preparation of ureter(s), renal vein(s), and renal artery(s), ligating branches, as necessary
50327	Backbench reconstruction of cadaver or living donor renal allograft prior to transplantation; venous anastomosis, each
50340	Recipient nephrectomy (separate procedure)
50360	Renal allotransplantation, implantation of graft; without recipient nephrectomy
50365	Renal allotransplantation, implantation of graft; with recipient nephrectomy

HCPCS Codes	Description
S2065	Simultaneous pancreas kidney transplantation

### ICD-10 Diagnosis Codes that Support Coverage Criteria

+ Indicates a code requiring an additional character

ICD-10-CM Code	Description
E10.10-E10.9	Type 1 diabetes mellitus with kidney complications
K86.0	Alcohol-induced chronic pancreatitis

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K86.1	Other chronic pancreatitis
N18.4	Chronic kidney disease, stage 4 (severe)
N18.5	Chronic kidney disease, stage 5
N18.6	End stage renal disease
<b>ICD-10-CM Code</b>	<b>Description</b>
Z94.0	Kidney transplant status

Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals	Date	Approval Date
Policy adapted for use by North Carolina Health Plan (Carolina Complete Health), per state feedback and requirements: replaced requirement for failure or non-existence of medical treatment for condition and indication of DM 1 and definitions of insulin dependence per specific C peptide values/C peptide values and BMI with the indication of severe complications due to hypoglycemic unawareness and labile Type 1 DM. Replaced contraindications of malignancy in past 2 years or metastasized malignancy with “active, potentially life-threatening malignancy.”	06/19	6/19
Annual review completed. No changes to policy content.	04/21	04/21

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### **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 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.

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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.

**Note: For Medicare members,** to ensure consistency with the Medicare National Coverage Determinations (NCD) and Local Coverage Determinations (LCD), all applicable NCDs, LCD's and Medicare Coverage Articles should be reviewed prior to applying the criteria set forth in this clinical policy. Refer to the CMS website at <http://www.cms.gov> for additional information.

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