**National Coverage Determination (NCD) 20.8.3**

**Single and Dual Chamber Permanent Cardiac Pacemakers**

Effective Date: August 13, 2013  
Implementation Date: July 7, 2014

Capital BlueCross is committed to providing coverage that is equal or more generous than Original Medicare. In an effort to make this coverage process more transparent, understandable and predictable for our Members, Capital BlueCross will notify our Members of any new coverage or change in coverage within 30 days of the release of the updates received from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The updates are called “National Coverage Determinations (NCD).”

**What is a National Coverage Determination?**
A National Coverage Determination (NCD) is a nationwide determination of whether Medicare will consider an item or service medically necessary. The new National Coverage Determinations (NCDs) are released periodically by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and will pertain to the coverage of procedures, drugs, or devices.

Effective for claims with dates of service on and after **August 13, 2013**, CMS will allow payment for implanted permanent cardiac pacemakers, single chamber or dual chamber, for the treatment of non-reversible symptomatic bradycardia* due to sinus node dysfunction (the natural pacemaker in the heart), and second and/or third degree atrioventricular block. Single chamber pacemakers typically send electrical current to either the right atrium or right ventricle chambers of the heart. Dual chamber pacemakers stimulate both.

*Bradycardia is a heart rate of less than 60 beats per minute. Symptoms associated with bradycardia can include: syncope, seizures, congestive heart failure, dizziness, and confusion.

The following indications are **covered** for implanted permanent single chamber or dual chamber cardiac pacemakers:

1. Documented non-reversible symptomatic bradycardia due to sinus node dysfunction.

2. Documented non-reversible symptomatic bradycardia due to second degree and/or third degree atrioventricular block.

The following indications are **non-covered** for implanted permanent single chamber or dual chamber cardiac pacemakers:
1. Reversible causes of bradycardia such as electrolyte abnormalities, medications or drugs, and hypothermia.

2. Asymptomatic first degree atrioventricular block.

3. Asymptomatic sinus bradycardia.

4. Asymptomatic sino-atrial block or asymptomatic sinus arrest.

5. Ineffective atrial contractions (e.g., chronic atrial fibrillation or flutter, or giant left atrium) without symptomatic bradycardia.

6. Asymptomatic second degree atrioventricular block of Mobitz Type I unless the QRS complexes are prolonged or electrophysiological studies have demonstrated that the block is at or beyond the level of the His Bundle (a component of the electrical conduction system of the heart).

7. Syncope of undetermined cause.

8. Bradycardia during sleep.

9. Right bundle branch block with left axis deviation (and other forms of fascicular or bundle branch block) without syncope or other symptoms of intermittent atrioventricular block.

10. Asymptomatic bradycardia in post-myocardial infarction patients about to initiate long-term beta-blocker drug therapy.

11. Frequent or persistent supraventricular tachycardia, except where the pacemaker is specifically for the control of tachycardia.

12. A clinical condition in which pacing takes place only intermittently and briefly, and which is not associated with a reasonable likelihood that pacing needs will become prolonged.

Please contact SeniorBlue HMO 1-800-779-6962 or SeniorBlue PPO at 1-866-987-4213 (TTY/TDD 1-800-779-6961), Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 8:00 p.m. with any additional questions.