

## Clinical Policy: Trifarotene (Aklief)

Reference Number: CP.PMN.225

Effective Date: 03.01.20

Last Review Date: 02.26

Line of Business: Commercial, HIM, Medicaid

[Revision Log](#)

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

### Description

Trifarotene (Aklief<sup>®</sup>) is a retinoid.

### FDA Approved Indication(s)

Aklief is indicated for the topical treatment of acne vulgaris in patients 9 years of age and older.

### 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<sup>®</sup> that Aklief is **medically necessary** when the following criteria are met:

#### I. Initial Approval Criteria

##### A. Acne Vulgaris (must meet all):

1. Diagnosis of acne vulgaris;
2. Age  $\geq$  9 years;
3. Failure of all of the following, unless all are contraindicated or clinically significant adverse effects are experienced (a, b, and c):<sup>†</sup>
  - a. generic formulary topical tretinoin\*;
  - b. generic formulary tazarotene;
  - c. generic formulary adapalene;

\*Prior authorization may be required for tretinoin

<sup>†</sup>For Illinois HIM requests, the step therapy requirements above do not apply as of 1/1/2026 per IL HB 5395.

4. Dose does not exceed 1 pump every 3 months.

**Approval duration: 12 months**

##### 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) 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, and CP.PMN.255 for Medicaid; or
  - b. For drugs NOT on the formulary (commercial, health insurance marketplace) 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, 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, and CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid.

## II. Continued Therapy

### A. Acne Vulgaris (must meet all):

1. Member meets one of the following (a or b):
  - a. Currently receiving medication via Centene benefit or member has previously met initial approval criteria;
  - b. Member is currently receiving medication and is enrolled in a state and product with continuity of care regulations (*refer to state specific addendums for CC.PHARM.03A and CC.PHARM.03B*);
2. Member is responding positively to therapy;
3. Dose does not exceed 1 pump every 3 months.

**Approval duration: 12 months**

### 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) 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, and CP.PMN.255 for Medicaid; or
  - b. For drugs NOT on the formulary (commercial, health insurance marketplace) 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, 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, 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 policies – CP.CPA.09 for commercial, HIM.PA.154 for health insurance marketplace, 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

##### *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
tretinoin (Retin-A <sup>®</sup> , Atralin <sup>®</sup> , Altreno <sup>®</sup> )	Apply a thin layer to the affected area(s) once daily at bedtime	Various
adapalene (Differin <sup>®</sup> )	Apply a thin layer to the affected area(s) once daily at bedtime	Various
tazarotene (Tazorac <sup>®</sup> )	Apply a thin layer to the affected area(s) once daily at bedtime	Various

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

##### *Appendix C: Contraindications/Boxed Warnings*

None reported

#### V. Dosage and Administration

Indication	Dosing Regimen	Maximum Dose
Acne vulgaris	Apply a thin layer of Aklief cream to the affected areas once daily, in the evening, on clean and dry skin	One application/day

#### VI. Product Availability

Cream (pump): 0.005% (30 g, 45 g, 75 g)

#### VII. References

1. Aklief Prescribing Information. Fort Worth, TX: Galderma Laboratories, L.P.; January 2022. Available at: [https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda\\_docs/label/2022/211527Orig1s001lbl.pdf](https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2022/211527Orig1s001lbl.pdf). Accessed November 18, 2025.
2. Zaenglein AL, Pathy AL, Schlosser BJ, et al. Guidelines of care for the management of acne vulgaris. *J Am Acad Dermatol* 2016;74:945-73.
3. Reynolds RV, Yeung H, Cheng CE, et al. Guidelines of care for the management of acne vulgaris. *J Am Acad Dermatol*. 2024 May;90(5):1006.e1-1006.e30. doi: 10.1016/j.jaad.2023.12.017.
4. Clinical Pharmacology [database online]. Tampa, FL: Gold Standard, Inc.; 2025. Available at: <https://www.clinicalkey.com/pharmacology/>. Accessed November 18, 2025.

<b>Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>P&amp;T Approval Date</b>
1Q 2022 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated.	10.01.21	02.22
Template changes applied to other diagnoses/indications and continued therapy section.	10.06.22	
1Q 2023 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated.	11.03.22	02.23
1Q 2024 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated. In initial approval criteria, added clarification stating prior authorization may be required for tretinoin.	02.13.24	02.24
1Q 2025 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated.	10.22.24	02.25
1Q 2026 annual review: added step therapy bypass per IL HB 5395; references reviewed and updated.	11.07.25	02.26

**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 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.

This clinical policy is the property of the Health Plan. Unauthorized copying, use, and distribution of this clinical policy or any information contained herein are strictly prohibited. Providers, members, and their representatives are bound to the terms and conditions expressed herein through the terms of their contracts. Where no such contract exists, providers, members and their representatives agree to be bound by such terms and conditions by providing services to members and/or submitting claims for payment for such services.

**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.

©2020 Centene Corporation. All rights reserved. All materials are exclusively owned by Centene Corporation and are protected by United States copyright law and international copyright law. No part of this publication may be reproduced, copied, modified, distributed, displayed, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means, or otherwise published without the prior written permission of Centene Corporation. You may not alter or remove any trademark, copyright or other notice contained herein. Centene<sup>®</sup> and Centene Corporation<sup>®</sup> are registered trademarks exclusively owned by Centene Corporation.