# Clinical Policy: Nivolumab and Relatlimab-rmbw (Opdualag)

Reference Number: CP.PHAR.588
Effective Date: 09.01.22
Last Review Date: 08.26
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

Nivolumab and relatlimab-rmbw (Opdualag®) is a fixed-dose combination of blocking antibodies against programmed death receptor-1 (PD-1) and lymphocyte activation gene-3 (LAG-3).

## FDA Approved Indication(s)

Opdualag is indicated for the treatment of adult and pediatric patients 12 years of age or older with unresectable or metastatic melanoma.

## 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 Opdualag is **medically necessary** when the following criteria are met:

**I. Initial Approval Criteria**

**A. Melanoma** (must meet all)**:**

1. Diagnosis of melanoma and disease is one of the following (a or b):
   a. Unresectable or metastatic;
   b. Resectable or limited resectable (*off-label*);
2. Prescribed by or in consultation with an oncologist;
3. Age ≥ 12 years;
4. If age ≥ 12 years and < 18 years, member's weight is ≥ 40 kg;
5. Request meets one of the following (a or b):*
   a. Dose does not exceed 480 mg of nivolumab and 160 mg of relatlimab every 4 weeks;
   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: 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/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. Melanoma** (must meet all)**:**

1. Currently receiving medication via Centene benefit, or documentation supports that member is currently receiving Opdualag for a covered indication and has received this medication for at least 30 days;
2. Member is responding positively to therapy;
3. If request is for a dose increase, request meets one of the following (a or b):*
   a. New dose does not exceed 480 mg of nivolumab and 160 mg of relatlimab every 4 weeks;
   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: 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/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.

**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/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
LAG-3: lymphocyte activation gene-3
PD-1: programmed death receptor-1

*Appendix B: Therapeutic Alternatives*
Not applicable

*Appendix C: Contraindications/Boxed Warnings*
None reported

**V. Dosage and Administration**

| Indication | Dosing Regimen | Maximum Dose |
|---|---|---|
| Melanoma (unresectable or metastatic) | 480 mg nivolumab with 160 mg relatlimab IV every 4 weeks | See dosing regimen |

**VI. Product Availability**

Single-dose vial: 240 mg of nivolumab and 80 mg of relatlimab per 20 mL

**VII. References**

1. Opdualag Prescribing Information. Princeton, NJ: Bristol Myers Squibb: March 2024. Available at: https://www.opdualag.com. Accessed April 24, 2026.
2. National Comprehensive Cancer Network Drugs and Biologics Compendium. Available at: https://www.nccn.org/professionals/drug_compendium/content/. Accessed April 24, 2026.
3. National Comprehensive Cancer Network: Melanoma: Cutaneous Version 2.2026. Available at: https://www.nccn.org/professionals/physician_gls/pdf/cutaneous_melanoma.pdf. Accessed April 24, 2026.
4. Tawbi HA, Schadendorf D, Lipson EJ, et al. Relatlimab and nivolumab versus nivolumab in untreated advanced melanoma. *N Engl J Med*. 2022 January; 386(1):24-34. doi: https://www.doi.org/10.1056/NEJMoa2109970.

**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.

| HCPCS Codes | Description |
|---|---|
| J9298 | Injection, nivolumab and relatlimab-rmbw, 3 mg/1 mg |

| Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals | Date | P&T Approval Date |
|---|---|---|
| Added HCPCS code [J9298]. Template changes applied to other diagnoses/indications. | 09.09.22 | |
| 3Q 2023 annual review: removed expired HCPCS codes [C9399, J3590]; references reviewed and updated. | 05.09.23 | 08.23 |
| 3Q 2024 annual review: added off label indication for resectable or limited resectable melanoma per NCCN 2A recommendation; revised weight criteria to apply only to pediatric patients per PI; references reviewed and updated. | 05.23.24 | 08.24 |
| 3Q 2025 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated. | 05.13.25 | 08.25 |
| 3Q 2026 annual review: added ICHRA line of business; extended initial approval duration from 6 months to 12 months for this maintenance medication for a chronic condition; references reviewed and updated. | 04.24.26 | 08.26 |

**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.

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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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