I. POLICY/CRITERIA

Priority Health covers treatment of intractable, disabling primary hyperhidrosis for the indications described below.

A. **Medical** treatment of intractable, disabling primary hyperhidrosis with **iontophoresis** (electrophoresis, Drionic device) is a covered benefit when all of the following criteria are met:

1. Topical aluminum chloride or other extra-strength antiperspirants are ineffective or result in a severe rash; and
2. Patient is unresponsive or unable to tolerate pharmacotherapy prescribed for excessive sweating (e.g., anticholinergics, beta-blockers, or benzodiazepines); and
3. Significant disruption of professional or work-related activities has occurred because of excessive sweating. Evidence that personal safety is jeopardized or evidence that impaired work performance jeopardized employment is required. Physician or employer statements including a detailed explanation are acceptable.

B. Treatment with Botulinum* Toxin A or B or tumescent liposuction may be medically necessary for the treatment of primary axillary hyperhidrosis when the condition is refractory to conventional medical treatment (see section A, 1 and 2), including an attempt at both topical and systemic pharmacotherapy (unless clinically contraindicated) and both (1) and (2) below are present:

1. The condition is significantly interfering with the patient's ability to perform age-appropriate activities of daily living; and
2. The condition is causing persistent or chronic cutaneous conditions such as skin maceration, dermatitis, fungal infections and secondary microbial conditions.

*Botox treatment requires prior authorization.

C. The following surgical treatments for palmar or axillary hyperhidrosis are covered for patients who meet the above-listed criteria and have failed to adequately respond to treatment with iontophoresis and/or there is failure,
contraindication or intolerance to the use of Botulinum toxin (Botox®) as a treatment for hyperhidrosis:

1. Open thoracic sympathectomy
2. Thoracoscopic sympathectomy

D. Surgical treatment of compensatory hyperhidrosis (the most common side effect of open or endoscopic sympathectomy) is not a covered benefit.

E. The following treatments are not a covered benefit because they have not been proven to be effective for this indication:

1. Psychotherapy
2. Hypnosis
3. Laser treatment (including subdermal Nd-YAG laser)
4. Microwave therapy
5. Percutaneous thoracic phenol sympathicolysis

F. Alternative therapy methods including homeopathy, massage**, acupuncture** and phytotherapeutic drugs are not covered benefits.

**Note: Acupuncture and massage therapy may be covered with a rider for some commercial plans.

II. MEDICAL NECESSITY REVIEW

☐ Required  ☑ Not Required *except for Botox treatment  ☐ Not Applicable

III. APPLICATION TO PRODUCTS

Coverage is subject to member’s specific benefits. Group specific policy will supersede this policy when applicable.

❖ HMO/EPO: This policy applies to insured HMO/EPO plans.
❖ POS: This policy applies to insured POS plans.
❖ PPO: This policy applies to insured PPO plans. Consult individual plan documents as state mandated benefits may apply. If there is a conflict between this policy and a plan document, the provisions of the plan document will govern.
❖ ASO: For self-funded plans, consult individual plan documents. If there is a conflict between this policy and a self-funded plan document, the provisions of the plan document will govern.
❖ INDIVIDUAL: For individual policies, consult the individual insurance policy. If there is a conflict between this medical policy and the individual insurance policy document, the provisions of the individual insurance policy will govern.
IV. DESCRIPTION

Background:

Sweating is a natural phenomenon necessary for the regulation of an individual's body temperature. Hyperhidrosis, or excessive sweating, is a medical condition that is defined as sweating beyond what is necessary to maintain thermal regulation.

Hyperhidrosis is classified as primary or secondary, depending on its cause or origin. Primary hyperhidrosis, also known as essential or idiopathic hyperhidrosis, is caused by an overactive sympathetic nervous system. It can lead to intractable and profuse sweating in several locations of the body, including palms (hands), axillae (armpits), and plantar (feet). Secondary hyperhidrosis is the result of an underlying condition, such as Parkinson's disease, hyperthyroidism, diabetes mellitus, hyperpituitarism, pyrexia, hypoglycemia, or menopause. Secondary hyperhidrosis usually affects the whole body.

Regardless of the type or cause of hyperhidrosis, severe palmar hyperhidrosis can disrupt professional and social life and may lead to emotional problems. In the case of secondary hyperhidrosis, treatment of the underlying condition should first be attempted. In patients with disabling primary hyperhidrosis, a variety of treatment methods have been used.

The simplest method to control or reduce profuse sweating is the application of topical agents, such as aluminum chloride or other extra-strength chemical antiperspirants. Usually recommended as the first therapeutic measure, topical antiperspirants are effective in cases with light to moderate hyperhidrosis but have to be repeated regularly. Oral prescription medications commonly used include: anticholinergics, beta-blockers, and benzodiazepines.

Iontophoresis or electrophoresis can be tried if antiperspirants are not effective. Iontophoresis uses electric current to enhance drug penetration through the stratum corneum, the principal barrier to percutaneous absorption. Iontophoresis
has been reported to provide temporary relief in mild cases of primary hyperhidrosis of the hands and feet. The procedure has to be repeated regularly, initially in 20-minute sessions several times a week, gradually stretching out the interval between treatments to 1-2 weeks; however, treatments must be maintained indefinitely to control the symptoms of mild hyperhidrosis. The results vary: many find the electric current uncomfortable, the treatment expensive, time consuming, and the results not lasting long enough. The Drionic device (General Medical Co., Los Angeles, California) is an iontophoretic device that can be purchased for home use.

Botulinum toxin type A (Botox) has been found to inhibit the release of acetylcholine not only at the neuromuscular junction, but also in postganglionic sympathetic fibers to sweat gland. There is some evidence from a limited number of small, short-term, randomized controlled trials that BTX-A can reduce the severity of primary axillary or palmar hyperhidrosis for several months, with only minor adverse effects. Several, very small, uncontrolled studies also suggest that BTX-A may be effective in relieving gustatory hyperhidrosis. Data regarding the efficacy of BTX-A for other types of hyperhidrosis are lacking, and long-term efficacy and safety, as well as patient selection criteria, have not been adequately determined. BTX-A (Botox®, Allergan Inc.) has been approved by the FDA for treatment of severe primary axillary hyperhidrosis that is inadequately managed with topical agents. BTX-B (Myobloc®/Neurobloc®, Solstice Neurosciences Inc.) for the treatment of hyperhidrosis is an off-label use (FDA, 2005).

In severe cases of intractable, disabling primary hyperhidrosis, surgical intervention has been utilized. The principle of sympathectomy is to interrupt the nerve tracks and nodes that transmit the signals to the sweat glands. Whether performed open or endoscopically, the most common side effect of surgery is compensatory hyperhidrosis characterized by a moderate increase in sweating in other parts of the body. A rare side effect is "gustatory sweating", a condition that leads to the sensation of sweating when eating.

Surgical removal of sweat glands has been shown to be only effective in the treatment of axillary hyperhidrosis, and may leave significant scarring. For a person suffering from primary hyperhidrosis, this approach is usually only a partial solution to the problem, especially since the most annoying areas usually are the hands.

Poor results have been reported with the use of psychotherapy and hypnosis. Psychological problems are in most cases a consequence of hyperhidrosis, not the cause. Hence, psychiatric or psychopharmacologic therapy cannot cure this disorder; at most it may help the patient to accept living with the problem.

Alternative medicine interventions, including homeopathy, massage, acupuncture and phytotherapeutic drugs, have not been proven effective.
For complete overview of standard treatment algorithms please refer to The International Hyperhidrosis Society at the following website: www.sweathelp.org

V. CODING INFORMATION

ICD-10 Codes that apply to this policy:
L74.510 Primary focal hyperhidrosis, axilla
L74.511 Primary focal hyperhidrosis, face
L74.512 Primary focal hyperhidrosis, palms
L74.513 Primary focal hyperhidrosis, soles
L74.519 Primary focal hyperhidrosis, unspecified
L74.52 Secondary focal hyperhidrosis

L74.510 Generalized hyperhidrosis

CPT/HCPCS Codes:
Surgical and Medical procedures billed with the above diagnoses include but are not limited to:
32664 Thoracoscopy, surgical; with thoracic sympathectomy
64804 Sympathectomy, cervicothoracic
64809 Sympathectomy, thoracolumbar
15877 Suction assisted lipectomy; trunk (Not covered for Medicaid)
97033 Application of a modality to one or more areas; iontophoresis, each 15 minutes

Other Procedures:
E1399 Durable medical equipment, miscellaneous for home iontopharesis unit
(Explanatory notes must accompany claim) Not covered for Medicaid

Prior Authorization required:
64650 Chemodenervation of eccrine glands; both axillae
64653 Chemodenervation of eccrine glands; other area(s) (eg, scalp, face, neck), per day
J0585 Injection, onabotulinum toxin A, 1 unit Botulinum toxin type A, per unit
J0586 Injection, abobotulinum toxin A, 5 units Injection, abobotulinum toxin A, 5 units
J0587 Injection, rimabotulinum toxin B, 100 units Botulinum toxin type B, per 100 units
J0588 Injection, incobotulinum toxin A, 1 unit

Not Covered
17110 Destruction (eg, laser surgery, electrosurgery, cryosurgery, chemosurgery, surgical curettement), of benign lesions other than skin tags or cutaneous vascular proliferative lesions; up to 14 lesions
17111 Destruction (eg, laser surgery, electrosurgery, cryosurgery, chemosurgery, surgical curettement), of benign lesions other than skin tags or cutaneous vascular proliferative lesions; 15 or more lesions
64999 Unlisted procedure, nervous system (when billed for phenol sympathicolysis; Explanatory notes must accompany claims billed with unlisted codes)
90832 Psychotherapy, 30 minutes with patient and/or family member
90833 Psychotherapy, 30 minutes with patient and/or family member when performed with an evaluation and management service (List separately in addition to the code for primary procedure)
90834 Psychotherapy, 45 minutes with patient and/or family member
90836 Psychotherapy, 45 minutes with patient and/or family member when performed with an evaluation and management service (List separately in addition to the code for primary procedure)
90837 Psychotherapy, 60 minutes with patient and/or family member
90838 Psychotherapy, 60 minutes with patient and/or family member when performed with an evaluation and management service (List separately in addition to the code for primary procedure)
90880 Hypnotherapy

97024 Application of a modality to 1 or more areas; diathermy (eg, microwave)
97813 Acupuncture, 1 or more needles; with electrical stimulation, initial 15 minutes of personal one-on-one contact with the patient
97810 Acupuncture, 1 or more needles; without electrical stimulation, initial 15 minutes of personal one-on-one contact with the patient
97811 Acupuncture, 1 or more needles; without electrical stimulation, each additional 15 minutes of personal one-on-one contact with the patient, with re-insertion of needle(s) (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
97814 Acupuncture, 1 or more needles; with electrical stimulation, each additional 15 minutes of personal one-on-one contact with the patient, with re-insertion of needle(s) (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)

VI. REFERENCES:

2. Botulinum Toxin Treatment for Hyperhidrosis, HAYES, Inc. February 2002
7. NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, Clinical Knowledge Summaries Service (CKS). Hyperhidrosis - management. CKS Clinical Knowledge Summaries. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK; Sowerby Centre for Health Informatics at Newcastle (SCHIN); revised March 2009.
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