



# BlueCross BlueShield of Louisiana

An independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

## Vigabatrin (Sabril)<sup>®</sup>

**Policy #** 00244

**Original Effective Date:** 12/16/2009

**Current Effective Date:** 12/18/2013

*Applies to all products administered or underwritten by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana and its subsidiary, HMO Louisiana, Inc. (collectively referred to as the "Company"), unless otherwise provided in the applicable contract. Medical technology is constantly evolving, and we reserve the right to review and update Medical Policy periodically.*

*Note: Repository Corticotropin Injection (ACTH Gel, H.P. Acthar Gel) is addressed in medical policy 00230.*

### When Services May Be Eligible for Coverage

*Coverage for eligible medical treatments or procedures, drugs, devices or biological products may be provided only if:*

- *Benefits are available in the member's contract/certificate, and*
- *Medical necessity criteria and guidelines are met.*

Based on review of available data, the Company may consider vigabatrin (Sabril)<sup>®</sup>‡ for the treatment of infantile spasms or refractory complex partial seizures to be **eligible for coverage**.

### Infantile Spasms

#### Patient Selection Criteria

Coverage eligibility for vigabatrin (Sabril) for the treatment of infantile spasms (IS) will be considered when all of the following criteria are met:

- Patient has a diagnosis of infantile spasms; and
- Patient is 1 month to 2 years of age; and
- Sabril is used as monotherapy.

### Refractory Complex Partial Seizures

#### Patient Selection Criteria

Coverage eligibility for vigabatrin (Sabril) for the treatment of refractory complex partial seizures will be considered when all of the following criteria are met:

- Patient has a diagnosis of refractory complex partial seizures (CPS); and
- Patient is greater than or equal to 10 years of age; and
- Sabril is used as adjunctive therapy in patients who have inadequately responded to alternative treatments and not as a first line agent for CPS.

### When Services Are Considered Investigational

*Coverage is not available for investigational medical treatments or procedures, drugs, devices or biological products.*

Based on review of available data, the Company considers the use of vigabatrin (Sabril) when patient selection criteria are not met to be **investigational**.\*

## Background/Overview

### About vigabatrin (Sabril) Tablets and Oral Solution

Sabril is an oral antiepileptic drug developed in the United States by Lundbeck Inc. Sabril is available in two formulations—in 500mg tablets and 500mg packets of powder for oral solution. These formulations are



# BlueCross BlueShield of Louisiana

An independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Vigabatrin (Sabril)<sup>®</sup>

Policy # 00244

Original Effective Date: 12/16/2009

Current Effective Date: 12/18/2013

used for use as add-on therapy for patients greater than or equal to 10 years of age with refractory CPS and for infants with IS. The precise mechanism of Sabril's antiseizure effect is unknown, but is believed to be the result of its action as an irreversible inhibitor of gamma-aminobutyric acid transaminase (GABA-T), the enzyme responsible for the metabolism of the inhibitory neurotransmitter GABA. This action results in increased levels of GABA in the central nervous system. No direct correlation between plasma concentration and efficacy has been established. The duration of drug effect is presumed to be dependent on the rate of enzyme re-synthesis rather than on the rate of elimination of the drug from the systemic circulation.

## Infantile Spasms

Infantile spasms are a difficult-to-treat epilepsy syndrome that usually strikes infants between three to six months old. An estimated 8,500 infants in the U.S. have been diagnosed with IS, and each year approximately 2,500 new cases of IS are reported in the U.S. Sabril may not be appropriate for use in all patients with IS.

## Complex Partial Seizures

There are three million Americans affected by epilepsy and approximately 35 percent have CPS, the single largest seizure type, which originates from a single region of the brain and can cause impaired consciousness. Despite the availability of many antiepileptic drugs, approximately 30 to 36 percent of adults with CPS continue to have seizures. Sabril provides a new and valuable add-on treatment option for CPS patients greater than or equal to 10 years of age who have not responded to several alternative treatments and are considered 'refractory' to treatment. Given the potential benefit compared to the risk of permanent vision loss, it is expected that only a small percentage of refractory CPS patients will initiate and maintain treatment with Sabril as add-on therapy.

## FDA or Other Governmental Regulatory Approval

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

On August 21, 2009, the FDA approved vigabatrin (Sabril) oral solution and tablets for treatment of IS and refractory CPS in patients who have inadequately responded to other anti-epilepsy drugs (AEDs). Sabril was the first therapy approved for the treatment of IS. In October of 2013, the age for treatment of refractory partial seizures was changed to greater than or equal to 10 years of age.

### **WARNING: VISION LOSS**

- Sabril causes permanent vision loss in infants, children and adults. Because assessing vision loss is difficult in children, the frequency and extent of vision loss in infants and children is poorly characterized. For this reason, the data described below is primarily based on the adult experience.
- In adults, Sabril causes permanent bilateral concentric visual field constriction in 30 percent or more of patients that ranges in severity from mild to severe, including tunnel vision to within ten degrees of visual fixation, and can result in disability. In some cases, Sabril also can damage the central retina and may decrease visual acuity.
- The onset of vision loss from Sabril is unpredictable, and can occur within weeks of starting treatment or sooner, or at any time during treatment, even after months or years.

©2013 Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana

An independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, or otherwise, without permission from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana.



# BlueCross BlueShield of Louisiana

An independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Vigabatrin (Sabril)<sup>®</sup>

Policy # 00244

Original Effective Date: 12/16/2009

Current Effective Date: 12/18/2013

- The risk of vision loss increases with increasing dose and cumulative exposure, but there is no dose or exposure known to be free of risk of vision loss.
- Vision testing at baseline (no later than four weeks after starting Sabril) and at least every three months during therapy is required for adults on Sabril. Vision testing is also required about three to six months after the discontinuation of Sabril therapy. Once detected, vision loss due to Sabril is not reversible. It is expected that, even with frequent monitoring, some patients will develop severe vision loss.
- It is possible that vision loss can worsen despite discontinuing Sabril.
- Because of the risk of vision loss, Sabril should be withdrawn from patients with infantile spasms who fail to show substantial clinical benefit within two to four weeks of initiation, or sooner if treatment failure becomes obvious. Patient response to and continued need for Sabril should be periodically reassessed.
- In infants and children, vision loss may not be detected until it is severe. Nonetheless, vision should be assessed to the extent possible at baseline (no later than four weeks after starting Sabril) and at least every three months during therapy. Once detected, vision loss due to Sabril is not reversible. Vision testing is also required about three to six months after the discontinuation of Sabril therapy.
- Symptoms of vision loss from Sabril are unlikely to be recognized by the parent or caregiver before vision loss is severe. Vision loss of milder severity, although unrecognized by the caregiver, may still adversely affect function.
- Sabril should not be used in patients with, or at high risk of, other types of irreversible vision loss unless the benefits of treatment clearly outweigh the risks. The interaction of other types of irreversible vision damage with vision damage from Sabril has not been well-characterized, but is likely adverse.
- Sabril should not be used with other drugs associated with serious adverse ophthalmic effects such as retinopathy or glaucoma unless the benefits clearly outweigh the risks.
- The lowest dose and shortest exposure to Sabril should be used that is consistent with clinical objectives.
- The possibility that vision loss from Sabril may be more common, more severe or have more severe functional consequences in infants and children than in adults cannot be excluded.

Because of the risk of permanent vision loss, Sabril is available only through a special restricted distribution program called SHARE Support Help and Resources for Epilepsy), by calling 1-888-45-SHARE. Only prescribers and pharmacies registered with SHARE may prescribe and distribute Sabril. In addition, Sabril may be dispensed only to patients who are enrolled in and meet all conditions of SHARE.

## **Rationale/Source**

Sabril is indicated as monotherapy for pediatric patients one month to two years of age with IS for whom the potential benefits outweigh the potential risk of vision loss, and as adjunctive (add-on) therapy for patients greater than or equal to 10 years of age with refractory CPS who have inadequately responded to several alternative treatments and for whom the potential benefits outweigh the risk of vision loss. Sabril is not indicated as a first line agent for CPS.



# BlueCross BlueShield of Louisiana

An independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Vigabatrin (Sabril)<sup>®</sup>

Policy # 00244

Original Effective Date: 12/16/2009

Current Effective Date: 12/18/2013

Sabril is the first therapy approved for the treatment of IS and an important new option as add-on therapy for the approximately 30 to 36 percent of adults with CPS whose seizures remain uncontrolled in spite of having many antiepileptic therapies already available.

## Infantile Spasms

The effectiveness of Sabril as monotherapy was established for IS in two multicenter controlled studies. Both studies were similar in terms of disease characteristics and prior treatments of patients and all enrolled infants had a confirmed diagnosis of IS.

Study 1 (N=221) was a multicenter, randomized, low-dose high-dose, parallel group, partially-blinded (caregivers knew the actual dose but not whether their child was classified as low or high dose; EEG reader was blinded but investigators were not blinded) study to evaluate the safety and efficacy of vigabatrin in patients <2 years of age with new-onset Infantile Spasms. Patients with both symptomatic and cryptogenic etiologies were studied. The study was comprised of two phases. The first phase was a 14 to 21 day partially-blind phase in which patients were randomized to receive either low- dose (18-36mg/kg/day) or high-dose (100-148mg/kg/day) vigabatrin. Study drug was titrated over seven days, followed by a constant dose for seven days. If the patient became spasm-free on or before day 14, another seven days of constant dose was administered. The primary efficacy endpoint of this study was the proportion of patients who were spasm-free for seven consecutive days beginning within the first 14 days of vigabatrin therapy. Patients considered spasm-free were defined as those patients who remained free of spasms (evaluated according to caregiver response to direct questioning regarding spasm frequency) and who had no indication of spasms or hypsarrhythmia during eight hours of CCTV EEG recording (including at least one sleep-wake-sleep cycle) performed within three days of the seventh day of spasm freedom and interpreted by a blinded EEG reader. Seventeen patients in the high dose group achieved spasm freedom compared with eight patients in the low dose group.

Study 2 (N=40) was a multicenter, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, parallel group study consisting of a pre-treatment (baseline) period of two to three days, followed by a five-day double-blind treatment phase during which patients were treated with vigabatrin (initial dose of 50mg/kg/day with titration allowed to 150mg/kg/day) or placebo. The primary efficacy endpoint in this study was the average percent change in daily spasm frequency, assessed during a pre-defined and consistent two-hour window of evaluation, comparing baseline to the final two days of the five-day double-blind treatment phase. No statistically significant differences were observed in the average frequency of spasms using the two-hour evaluation window. However, a post-hoc alternative efficacy analysis, using a 24-hour clinical evaluation window, found a statistically significant difference in the overall percentage of reductions in spasms between the vigabatrin group (68.9%) and the placebo group (17.0%) (p=0.030).

## Complex Partial Seizures in Adults

The effectiveness of Sabril as adjunctive therapy in adult patients with CPS was established in two U.S. multicenter, double-blind, placebo-controlled, parallel-group clinical studies. A total of 357 adults (age 18 to 60 years) with CPS, with or without secondary generalization were enrolled (Studies 1 and 2). Patients were required to be on an adequate and stable dose of an anticonvulsant, and have a history of failure on an adequate regimen of carbamazepine or phenytoin. Patients had a history of about eight seizures per



# BlueCross BlueShield of Louisiana

An independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Vigabatrin (Sabril)<sup>®</sup>

Policy # 00244

Original Effective Date: 12/16/2009

Current Effective Date: 12/18/2013

month (median) for about 20 years (median) prior to entrance into the study. These studies were not capable by design of demonstrating direct superiority of Sabril over any other anticonvulsant added to a regimen to which the patient had not adequately responded. Further, in these studies patients had previously been treated with a limited range of anticonvulsants.

The primary measure of efficacy was the patient's reduction in mean monthly frequency of complex partial seizures plus partial seizures secondarily generalized at end of study compared to baseline.

Study 1 (N=174) was a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, dose-response study consisting of an 8-week baseline period followed by an 18-week treatment period. Patients were randomized to receive placebo or 1, 3, or 6g/day vigabatrin administered twice daily. During the first six weeks following randomization, the dose was titrated upward beginning with 1g/day and increasing by 0.5g/day on days 1 and 5 of each subsequent week in the 3g/day and 6g/day groups, until the assigned dose was reached. The 3g/day and 6g/day dose groups were statistically significantly superior to placebo, but the 6g/day dose was not superior to the threeg/day dose.

Study 2 (N=183 randomized, 182 evaluated for efficacy) was a randomized, doubleblind, placebo-controlled, parallel study consisting of an eight-week baseline period and a 16-week treatment period. During the first four weeks following randomization, the dose of vigabatrin was titrated upward beginning with 1g/day and increased by 0.5g/day on a weekly basis to the maintenance dose of 3g/day. Vigabatrin 3g/day was statistically significantly superior to placebo in reducing seizure frequency.

## **Complex Partial Seizures in Patients 10 to 16 Years of Age**

Sabril was studied in three double-blind, placebo-controlled, parallel-group studies in 269 patients who received Sabril and 104 patients who received placebo. No individual study was considered adequately powered to determine efficacy in pediatric patients age 10 years and above. The data from all three pediatric studies were pooled and used in a pharmacometric bridging analysis using weight-normalized doses to establish efficacy and determine appropriate dosing. All three studies were randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, parallel-group, adjunctive-treatment studies in patients aged 3-16 years with uncontrolled complex partial seizures with or without secondary generalization. The study period included a 6 to 10 week baseline phase and a 14 to 17 week treatment phase (composed of a titration and maintenance period). The pharmacometric bridging approach consisted of defining a weight-normalized dose-response, and showing that a similar dose-response relationship exists between pediatric patients and adults patients when Sabril was given as adjunctive therapy for complex partial seizures. Dosing recommendations in pediatric patients 10 to 16 years of age were derived from simulations utilizing these pharmacometric dose-response analyses.

## **References**

1. Sabril<sup>®</sup> (vigabatrin) Full Prescribing Information. Updated 10/2013.
2. Kwan P, Brodie MJ. Early identification of refractory epilepsy. New England Journal of Medicine. February 3, 2000;342:314-319.
3. Devinsky O. Patients with refractory seizures. New England Journal of Medicine. May 20, 1999; 340:1565-70.
4. Epilepsy and Seizure Statistics. Epilepsy Foundation.org. <http://www.epilepsyfoundation.org/about/statistics.cfm>.
5. Murro, Anthony M. EMedicine.com. Complex Partial Seizures. <http://www.emedicine.com/Neuro/topic74.htm>
6. Sperling, M. The consequences of uncontrolled epilepsy. CNS Spectr 2004;9(2):98-101,106-109.

©2013 Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana

An independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, or otherwise, without permission from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana.



# BlueCross BlueShield of Louisiana

An independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Vigabatrin (Sabril)<sup>®</sup>

Policy # 00244

Original Effective Date: 12/16/2009

Current Effective Date: 12/18/2013

7. National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. NINDS Infantile Spasms Information Page. Available at: <http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/infantilespasms/infantilespasms.htm?css=print>.
8. Hurst D. The epidemiology of infantile spasms. In: Dulac O, Chugani H, Dalla Bernardina B., eds. Infantile Spasms and West Syndrome. Philadelphia, PA: Saunders; 1994

## **Coding**

*The five character codes included in the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana Medical Policy Coverage Guidelines are obtained from Current Procedural Terminology (CPT)<sup>®</sup>†, copyright 2012 by the American Medical Association (AMA). CPT is developed by the AMA as a listing of descriptive terms and five character identifying codes and modifiers for reporting medical services and procedures performed by physician*

*The responsibility for the content of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana Medical Policy Coverage Guidelines is with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana and no endorsement by the AMA is intended or should be implied. The AMA disclaims responsibility for any consequences or liability attributable or related to any use, nonuse or interpretation of information contained in Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana Medical Policy Coverage Guidelines. Fee schedules, relative value units, conversion factors and/or related components are not assigned by the AMA, are not part of CPT, and the AMA is not recommending their use. The AMA does not directly or indirectly practice medicine or dispense medical services. The AMA assumes no liability for data contained or not contained herein. Any use of CPT outside of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana Medical Policy Coverage Guidelines should refer to the most current, Current Procedural Terminology which contains the complete and most current listing of CPT codes and descriptive terms. Applicable FARS/DFARS apply.*

*CPT is a registered trademark of the American Medical Association.*

Codes used to identify services associated with this policy may include (but may not be limited to) the following:

Code Type	Code
CPT	J3490
HCPCS	No codes
ICD-9 Diagnosis	All diagnoses
ICD-9 Procedure	No codes

## **Policy History**

Original Effective Date: 12/16/2009

Current Effective Date: 12/18/2013

12/04/2009	Medical Policy Committee approval
12/16/2009	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. New policy.
12/01/2010	Medical Policy Committee approval
12/15/2010	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. No change to coverage.
12/08/2011	Medical Policy Committee approval
12/21/2011	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. No change to coverage.
12/06/2012	Medical Policy Committee approval
12/19/2012	Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. No change to coverage.
12/12/2013	Medical Policy Committee approval

©2013 Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana

An independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, or otherwise, without permission from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana.



# BlueCross BlueShield of Louisiana

An independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Vigabatrin (Sabril)<sup>®</sup>

Policy # 00244

Original Effective Date: 12/16/2009

Current Effective Date: 12/18/2013

12/18/2013 Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. No change to coverage. FDA has combined the indications for both formulations of Sabril. Also extended the age for complex partial seizures to match new FDA expanded indication.

Next Scheduled Review Date: 12/2014

\*Investigational – A medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product is Investigational if the effectiveness has not been clearly tested and it has not been incorporated into standard medical practice. Any determination we make that a medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product is Investigational will be based on a consideration of the following:

- A. whether the medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product can be lawfully marketed without approval of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and whether such approval has been granted at the time the medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product is sought to be furnished; or
- B. whether the medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product requires further studies or clinical trials to determine its maximum tolerated dose, toxicity, safety, effectiveness, or effectiveness as compared with the standard means of treatment or diagnosis, must improve health outcomes, according to the consensus of opinion among experts as shown by reliable evidence, including:
  1. Consultation with the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association technology assessment program (TEC) or other nonaffiliated technology evaluation center(s);
  2. credible scientific evidence published in peer-reviewed medical literature generally recognized by the relevant medical community; or
  3. reference to federal regulations.

\*\*Medically Necessary (or "Medical Necessity") - Health care services, treatment, procedures, equipment, drugs, devices, items or supplies that a Provider, exercising prudent clinical judgment, would provide to a patient for the purpose of preventing, evaluating, diagnosing or treating an illness, injury, disease or its symptoms, and that are:

- A. in accordance with nationally accepted standards of medical practice;
- B. clinically appropriate, in terms of type, frequency, extent, level of care, site and duration, and considered effective for the patient's illness, injury or disease; and
- C. not primarily for the personal comfort or convenience of the patient, physician or other health care provider, and not more costly than an alternative service or sequence of services at least as likely to produce equivalent therapeutic or diagnostic results as to the diagnosis or treatment of that patient's illness, injury or disease.

For these purposes, "nationally accepted standards of medical practice" means standards that are based on credible scientific evidence published in peer-reviewed medical literature generally recognized by the relevant medical community, Physician Specialty Society recommendations and the views of Physicians practicing in relevant clinical areas and any other relevant factors.

† Indicated trademarks are the registered trademarks of their respective owners.

**NOTICE:** Medical Policies are scientific based opinions, provided solely for coverage and informational purposes. Medical Policies should not be construed to suggest that the Company recommends, advocates, requires, encourages, or discourages any particular treatment, procedure, or service, or any particular course of treatment, procedure, or service.