

## Updates to AIM Specialty Health musculoskeletal interventional pain management clinical appropriateness guideline

*This communication applies to the Medicaid and Medicare Advantage programs for Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield (Anthem).*

Effective for dates of service on and after March 13, 2022, the following updates will apply to the clinical appropriateness guideline for musculoskeletal (MSK) interventional pain management from AIM Specialty Health®.\* As part of the AIM guideline annual review process, these updates are focused on advancing efforts to drive clinically appropriate, safe, and affordable healthcare services.

### Updates by section:

- **Epidural injection procedures (ESI) and diagnostic selective nerve root blocks (SNRB):**
  - Allow more frequent ESI in newly diagnosed patients
  - Remove imaging requirement in certain circumstances
  - Require similar criteria as ESI for diagnostic SNRB
  - Add epidural abscess as a contraindication
  - Limit multilevel and combination diagnostic SNRB
- **Paravertebral facet injection/medial branch block (MBB)/neurolysis:**
  - Limit indefinite use of diagnostic MBB
  - Add indication for diagnostic pars defect MBB
  - Expand exceptions allowed for intraarticular facet injections
  - Define MBB timing with respect to radiofrequency neurotomy, MBB limited to RFA candidacy
  - Limit open surgical neurolysis and limited multiple spinal injections
- **Sacroiliac joint injections:**
  - Limit indefinite use of diagnostic intraarticular injections
  - Disallow sacral lateral branch blocks
  - Disallow sacroiliac joint therapeutic injections in a previously fused joint
- **Spinal cord and nerve root stimulators:**
  - Allow minimally invasive pain procedures to satisfy conservative management definition
  - Specify timing of mental health evaluation
  - Define indications for repeat stimulator trial

As a reminder, ordering and servicing providers may submit prior authorization requests to AIM in one of several ways:

- Access AIM's *ProviderPortal*<sub>SM</sub> directly at <https://providerportal.com>. *Online access is available 24/7 to process orders in real-time and is the fastest and most convenient way to request authorization*
- Access AIM via the Availity Web Portal\* at <https://availity.com>.
- Call the AIM Contact Center toll-free number: **833-342-1252** Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. CT.

If you have questions related to guidelines, please contact AIM via email at [aim.guidelines@aimspecialtyhealth.com](mailto:aim.guidelines@aimspecialtyhealth.com). Additionally, you may access and download a copy of the current and upcoming guidelines [here](#).

\* AIM Specialty Health® is an independent company providing some utilization review services on behalf of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield. Availity, LLC is an independent company providing administrative support services on behalf of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield.