BlueCross BlueShield
Federal Employee Program

# QUTENZA
# (capsaicin patch)

## RATIONALE FOR INCLUSION IN PA PROGRAM

### Background

Qutenza (capsaicin) is an agonist for the transient receptor potential vanilloid 1 receptor (TRPV1), which is an ion channel-receptor complex expressed on nociceptive nerve fibers in the skin. Topical administration of capsaicin causes an initial enhanced stimulation of the TRPV1-expressing cutaneous nociceptors that may be associated with painful sensations. This is followed by pain relief thought to be mediated by a reduction in TRPV1-expressing nociceptive nerve endings. Over the course of several months, there may be a gradual re-emergence of painful neuropathy thought to be due to TRPV1 nerve fiber reinnervation of the treated area (1).

### Regulatory Status

FDA-approved indication: Qutenza is indicated for the treatment of neuropathic pain associated with postherpetic neuralgia (PHN) and neuropathic pain associated with diabetic peripheral neuropathy (DPN) of the feet (1).

Qutenza should not be dispensed to patients for self-administration or handling. Only physicians or health care professionals under the close supervision of a physician are to administer and handle Qutenza (1).

The recommended dose of Qutenza is a single application of up to four patches. Treatment with Qutenza may be repeated every three months or as warranted by the return of pain (not more frequently than every three months) (1).

The safety and effectiveness of Qutenza in pediatric patients less than 18 years of age have not been established (1).

### Summary

Qutenza (capsaicin) is an agonist for the transient receptor potential vanilloid 1 receptor (TRPV1), which is an ion channel-receptor complex expressed on nociceptive nerve fibers in the skin. Topical administration of capsaicin causes an initial enhanced stimulation of the TRPV1-expressing cutaneous nociceptors that may be associated with painful sensations. This is followed by pain relief thought to be mediated by a reduction in TRPV1-expressing nociceptive nerve

endings. The safety and effectiveness of Qutenza in pediatric patients less than 18 years of age have not been established (1).

Prior approval is required to ensure the safe, clinically appropriate, and cost-effective use of Qutenza while maintaining optimal therapeutic outcomes.

**References**

1. Qutenza patch [package insert]. Morristown, NJ: Averitas Pharma, Inc.; February 2023.