

UnitedHealthcare Pharmacy  
Clinical Pharmacy Programs

Program Number	2025 P 2349-2
Program	Prior Authorization/Medical Necessity
Medication	Vafseo® (vadadustat)
P&T Approval Date	9/2024, 9/2025
Effective Date	12/1/2025

## 1. Background:

Vafseo® (vadadustat) is a hypoxia-inducible factor prolyl hydroxylase (HIF PH) inhibitor indicated for the treatment of anemia due to chronic kidney disease (CKD) in adults who have been receiving dialysis for at least three months.

The treatment of anemia includes intravenous (IV) iron and/or treatment with either an erythropoiesis-stimulating agent (ESA) [e.g., Aranesp (darbepoetin), Epogen (epoetin alfa), Procrit (epoetin alfa), Retacrit (epoetin alfa-epbx)] or a hypoxia-inducible factor prolyl hydroxylase inhibitor (HIF PHI) [e.g., Jesduvroq (daprodustat), Vafseo (vadadustat)].

### Limitations of Use

- Vafseo has not been shown to improve quality of life, fatigue, or patient well-being.
- Vafseo is not indicated for use as a substitute for transfusion in patients requiring immediate correction of anemia or in patients with CKD not on dialysis.

## 2. Coverage Criteria<sup>a</sup>:

### **A. Initial Authorization**

1. **Vafseo** will be approved based on **all** of the following criteria:

a. Diagnosis of anemia due to chronic kidney disease (CKD)

**-AND-**

b. Patient has been receiving dialysis for at least three months

**-AND-**

c. **Both** of the following:

- (1) Ferritin greater than 100 mcg/L
- (2) Transferrin saturation (TSAT) greater than 20%

**-AND-**

d. Hemoglobin level less than 11 g/dL

-AND-

- e. Trial and failure, contraindication or intolerance to an erythropoietin stimulating agent (ESA) [e.g., Aranesp (darbepoetin), Epogen (epoetin alfa), Procrit (epoetin alfa), Retacrit (epoetin alfa-epbx)]

-AND-

- f. Prescribed by or in consultation with one of the following:

- (1) Hematologist
- (2) Nephrologist

**Authorization will be issued for 12 months.**

**B. Reauthorization**

- 1. **Vafseo** will be approved based on all of the following criteria:

- a. Documentation of positive clinical response to Vafseo therapy (e.g., clinically meaningful increase in hemoglobin level)

-AND-

- b. Adequate iron stores confirmed by both of the following:

- (1) Ferritin greater than 100 mcg/L
- (2) Transferrin saturation (TSAT) greater than 20%

-AND-

- c. Hemoglobin level does not exceed 11 g/dL

-AND-

- d. Patient is not on concurrent treatment with an erythropoietin stimulating agent (ESA) [e.g., Aranesp (darbepoetin), Epogen (epoetin alfa), Procrit (epoetin alfa), Retacrit (epoetin alfa-epbx)]

-AND-

- e. Prescribed by or in consultation with one of the following:

- (1) Hematologist
- (2) Nephrologist

**Authorization will be issued for 12 months.**

<sup>a</sup> State mandates may apply. Any federal regulatory requirements and the member specific benefit plan coverage may also impact coverage criteria. Other policies and utilization management programs may apply.

### 3. Additional Clinical Rules:

- Notwithstanding Coverage Criteria, UnitedHealthcare may approve initial and re-authorization based solely on previous claim/medication history, diagnosis codes (ICD-10) and/or claim logic. Use of automated approval and re-approval processes varies by program and/or therapeutic class

### 4. References:

1. Vafseo [package insert]. Cambridge, MA: Akebia Therapeutics, Inc.; March 2024.
2. Eckardt K, Agarwal R, Aswad A, et al. Safety and efficacy of vadadustat for anemia in patients undergoing dialysis. *N Engl J Med*. 2021;384(17):1601-1612.
3. Huang Q, Liao Z, Liu X, Xia Y, Wang J. Efficacy and safety of vadadustat compared to darbepoetin alfa on anemia in patients with chronic kidney disease: a meta-analysis. *Int Urol Nephrol*. 2023 Feb;55(2):325-334. doi: 10.1007/s11255-022-03316-z. Epub 2022 Aug 12. PMID: 35960479.
4. Ketteler M, Block GA, Evenepoel P, Fukagawa M, Herzog CA, McCann L, Moe SM, Shroff R, Tonelli MA, Toussaint ND, Vervloet MG, Leonard MB. KDIGO 2017 Clinical Practice Guideline Update for the Diagnosis, Evaluation, Prevention, and Treatment of Chronic Kidney Disease–Mineral and Bone Disorder (CKD-MBD). *Ann Intern Med*. 2018 Mar 20;168(6):422-430.

Program	Prior Authorization/Medical Necessity - Vafseo (vadadustat)
<b>Change Control</b>	
9/2024	New program.
9/2025	Annual review. Updated hemoglobin reauthorization criterion.