

## MEDICAL POLICY – 2.01.71

## Nonpharmacologic Treatment of Rosacea

BCBSA Ref. Policy: 2.01.71

Effective Date: June 1, 2018

Last Revised: June 1, 2018


Replaces: 2.01.519

RELATED MEDICAL POLICIES:

10.01.514 Cosmetic and Reconstructive Services

Select a hyperlink below to be directed to that section.

[POLICY CRITERIA](#) | [CODING](#) | [RELATED INFORMATION](#)  
[EVIDENCE REVIEW](#) | [REFERENCES](#) | [HISTORY](#)

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## Introduction

Rosacea is a long-lasting skin condition that affects adults. It usually affects more women than men. And while it can affect anyone, it usually occurs more frequently in people with fair skin. Typically, rosacea affects adults between the ages of 20 and 60. It often creates redness on the cheeks, nose, chin, or forehead. It can also affect the neck, chest, scalp, or ears. The redness tends to become more persistent over time, with little blood vessels appearing. Bumps and pimples may also develop. In some people, the nose becomes swollen or bumpy due to extra tissue. (This is known as rhinophyma.) While rosacea can't be cured, medication is effective in controlling symptoms. Other treatments, such as laser or light therapy or removing the top layers of the skin (dermabrasion), have been tried. These types of rosacea treatments are investigational (unproven). Published medical studies do not conclusively prove that they work as well as or better than using medication. More and longer studies are needed.

**Note:** The Introduction section is for your general knowledge and is not to be taken as policy coverage criteria. The rest of the policy uses specific words and concepts familiar to medical professionals. It is intended for providers. A provider can be a person, such as a doctor, nurse, psychologist, or dentist. A provider also can be a place where medical care is given, like a hospital, clinic, or lab. This policy informs them about when a service may be covered.

Service	Investigational
<b>Nonpharmacologic treatment of rosacea</b>	<b>Nonpharmacologic treatment of rosacea, including but not limited to laser and light therapy, dermabrasion, chemical peels, surgical debulking, and electrosurgery, is considered investigational.</b>

## Coding

Code	Description
<b>CPT</b>	
17106	Destruction of cutaneous vascular proliferative lesions (eg, laser technique); less than 10 sq. cm
17107	Destruction of cutaneous vascular proliferative lesions (eg, laser technique); 10.0 to 50.0 sq. cm
17108	Destruction of cutaneous vascular proliferative lesions (eg, laser technique); over 50.0 sq. cm

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## Related Information

N/A

## Evidence Review

### Description

Rosacea is a chronic, inflammatory skin condition without a known cure; the goal of treatment is symptom management. Nonpharmacologic treatments, including laser and light therapy as well



as dermabrasion, which are the focus of this evidence review, are proposed for patients who do not want to use or are unresponsive to pharmacologic therapy.

## Background

Rosacea is characterized by episodic erythema, edema, papules, and pustules that occur primarily on the face but may also be present on the scalp, ears, neck, chest, and back. On occasion, rosacea may affect the eyes. Patients with rosacea tend to flush or blush easily. Because rosacea causes facial swelling and redness, it is easily confused with other skin conditions, such as acne, skin allergy, and sunburn.

Rosacea mostly affects adults with fair skin between the ages of 20 and 60 years and is more common in women, but often most severe in men. Rosacea is not life-threatening, but if not treated, may lead to persistent erythema, telangiectasias, and rhinophyma (hyperplasia and nodular swelling and congestion of the skin of the nose). The etiology and pathogenesis of rosacea are unknown but may result from both genetic and environmental factors. Some theories on the causes of rosacea include blood vessel disorders, chronic *Helicobacter pylori* infection, demodex folliculorum (mites), and immune system disorders.

While the clinical manifestations of rosacea do not usually impact the physical health status of the patient, psychological consequences from the most visually apparent symptoms (ie, erythema, papules, pustules, telangiectasias) that may impact the quality of life. Rhinophyma, an end-stage of chronic acne, has been associated with obstruction of nasal passages and basal cell carcinoma in rare, severe cases. The probability of developing nasal obstruction or basal or squamous cell carcinoma with rosacea is not sufficiently great to warrant preventive removal of rhinophymatous tissue.

## *Treatment*

Rosacea treatment can be effective to relieve its signs and symptoms. Treatment may include oral and topical antibiotics, isotretinoin,  $\beta$ -blockers, clonidine, and anti-inflammatories. Patients are also instructed on various self-care measures such as avoiding skin irritants and dietary items thought to exacerbate acute flare-ups. Nonpharmacologic therapy has also been tried in patients who cannot tolerate or do not want to use pharmacologic treatments. To reduce visible blood vessels, treat rhinophyma, reduce redness, and improve appearance, various techniques have been used such as laser and light therapy, dermabrasion, chemical peels, surgical debulking, and electrosurgery. Various lasers used include low-powered electrical devices and



vascular light lasers to remove telangiectasias, CO2 lasers to remove unwanted tissue from rhinophyma and reshape the nose and intense pulsed lights that generate multiple wavelengths to treat a broader spectrum of tissue.

## Summary of Evidence

For individuals who have rosacea who receive nonpharmacologic treatment (eg, laser therapy, light therapy, dermabrasion), the evidence includes several small randomized, split-face design trials. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, change in disease status, and treatment-related morbidity. None of the randomized controlled trials included a comparison group of patients receiving a placebo or pharmacologic treatment; therefore, these trials do not offer definitive evidence on the efficacy of nonpharmacologic treatment compared with alternative treatments. There is a need for randomized controlled trials that compare nonpharmacologic treatments with placebo controls and with pharmacologic treatments. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

## Ongoing and Unpublished Clinical Trials

Some currently unpublished trials that might influence this review are listed in [Table 1](#).

**Table 1. Summary of Key Trials**

NCT No.	Trial Name	Planned Enrollment	Completion Date
<b>Ongoing</b>			
<a href="#">NCT02075671</a> <sup>a</sup>	Photodynamic Therapy for Papulopustular Rosacea	30	Aug 2018
<a href="#">NCT03211585</a>	Evaluation Of The Effect Of The Perfecta V-Beam Laser On Rosacea (Facial Redness, Telangiectasias And Photodamage)	20	Dec 2018
<a href="#">NCT03194698</a>	Efficacy of Intense Pulsed Light Treatment of Dry Eye and Ocular Rosacea	20	Dec 2018

NCT: national clinical trial.

<sup>a</sup> Denotes industry-sponsored or cosponsored trial.



## Practice Guidelines and Position Statements

### *American Acne and Rosacea Society*

In 2014, the American Acne and Rosacea Society issued consensus recommendations on the management of rosacea.<sup>9</sup> The Society stated that lasers and intensely pulsed light devices could improve certain clinical manifestations of rosacea that have not responded to medical therapy. The recommendations indicated that these therapies would have to be repeated intermittently to sustain improvement.

### *American Academy of Dermatology*

In 2017, the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) released online guidance for treatment and management of rosacea.<sup>10</sup> AAD encouraged patients to identify their triggers to minimize symptoms, including protection from exposure to the sun, heat, stress, alcohol, and spicy foods. AAD indicated that “laser or light therapy may be considered to reduce visible blood vessels. Thickening of the skin associated with may be treated with laser skin resurfacing.” AAD also stated that “researchers continue to study how lasers and light treatments can treat rosacea. As we learn more, these devices may play a bigger role in treating rosacea.”

### *National Institutes for Health and Care Excellence*

In 2017, National Institutes for Health and Care Excellence published online pathways addressing skin damage and skin conditions.<sup>11</sup> Pathways provide guidance on the use of topical agents to manage rosacea. There are no pathways, guidance, or recommendations on nonpharmacologic treatments for rosacea.

## Medicare National Coverage

There is no national coverage determination. In the absence of a national coverage determination, coverage decisions are left to the discretion of local Medicare carriers.



## Regulatory Status

Several laser and light therapy systems have been cleared for marketing by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration through the 510(k) process for various dermatologic indications, including rosacea. For example, rosacea is among the indications for:

- Candela® pulse dye laser system (Candela, Wayland, MA)
- Lumenis® One Family of Systems IPL component (Lumenis, Santa Clara, CA)
- Harmony® XL multi-application platform laser device (Alma Lasers, Israel)
- UV-300 Pulsed Light Therapy System (New Star Lasers, Roseville, CA)
- CoolTouch® PRIMA Pulsed Light Therapy System (New Star Lasers, Roseville, CA).

FDA product code: GEX.

## References

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10. American Academy of Dermatology. Lasers and lights: How well do they treat rosacea? 2017; <https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/acne-and-rosacea/rosacea/lasers-and-lights-how-well-do-they-treat-rosacea> Accessed February 2018.
11. National Institutes for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Skin conditions overview. 2017; <https://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/skin-conditions> Accessed February 2018.

## History

Date	Comments
03/01/18	Policy reinstated, approved February 13, 2018, effective June 1, 2018. This policy was previously deleted, but now replaces policy 2.01.519. Nonpharmacologic treatment of rosacea is considered investigational.
06/01/18	Minor update; removed note and link to previous policy 2.01.519 which has been deleted.

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ແຈ້ງການນີ້ມີຂໍ້ມູນສໍາຄັນ. ແຈ້ງການນີ້ອາດຈະມີຂໍ້ມູນສໍາຄັນກ່ຽວກັບຄໍາຮ້ອງສະໝັກ ຫຼື ຄວາມຄົມຄອງປະກັນໄພຂອງທ່ານຜ່ານ Premera Blue Cross. ອາດຈະມີວັນທີ່ສໍາຄັນໃນແຈ້ງການນີ້. ທ່ານອາດຈະຈຳເປັນຕ້ອງດໍາເນີນການຕາມກຳນົດ ເວລາສະເພາະເພື່ອຮັກສາຄວາມຄົມຄອງປະກັນສະພາບ ຫຼື ຄວາມຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອເວັ້ນເວົ້ອງຄ່າໃຊ້ຈ່າຍຂອງທ່ານໄວ້. ທ່ານມີສິດໄດ້ຮັບຂໍ້ມູນນີ້ ແລະ ຄວາມຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອເປັນພາສາຂອງທ່ານໂດຍບໍ່ເສຍຄ່າ. ໃຫ້ໃບທາ 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).

**ភាសាខ្មែរ (Khmer):**

សេចក្តីជូនដំណឹងនេះមានព័ត៌មានយ៉ាងសំខាន់។ សេចក្តីជូនដំណឹងនេះប្រហែលជាមានព័ត៌មានយ៉ាងសំខាន់អំពីទម្រង់បែបបទ ឬការរ៉ាប់រងរបស់អ្នកតាមរយៈ Premera Blue Cross ។ ប្រហែលជាមាន កាលបរិច្ឆេទសំខាន់នៅក្នុងសេចក្តីជូនដំណឹងនេះ។ អ្នកប្រហែលជាត្រូវការបញ្ជាក់សមត្ថភាព ដល់កិច្ចការផ្ទៃក្នុងដូចជា ឆ្លើយតបនឹងសំណួរ ឬការស្នើសុំឱ្យអ្នកផ្សេងទៀត ឬប្រាក់ជំនួយចេញថ្លៃ។ អ្នកមានសិទ្ធិទទួលបានព័ត៌មាននេះ និងជំនួយនៅក្នុងភាសារបស់អ្នកដោយមិនអស់លុយឡើយ។ សូមទូរស័ព្ទ 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357)។

**ਪੰਜਾਬੀ (Punjabi):**

ਇਸ ਨੋਟਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਖਾਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਹੈ. ਇਸ ਨੋਟਿਸ ਵਿਚ Premera Blue Cross ਵਲੋਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਕਵਰੇਜ ਅਤੇ ਅਰਜੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ . ਇਸ ਨੋਟਿਸ ਨਵ ਖਾਸ ਤਾਰੀਖਾਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ. ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਜਸਰਤ ਕਵਰੇਜ ਰਿੱਖਣੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਜਾਂ ਓਸ ਦੀ ਲਾਗਤ ਜਵਿੱਚ ਮਦਦ ਦੇ ਇਕੱਠ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਅੰਤਮ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਢੁੱਝ ਖਾਸ ਕਦਮ ਚੁੱਕਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ ,ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਮੁਫਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਤੋਂ ਅਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਮਦਦ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਹੈ ,ਕਾਲ 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).

**فارسی (Farsi):**

این اعلامیه حاوی اطلاعات مهم میباشد. این اعلامیه ممکن است حاوی اطلاعات مهم درباره فرم تقاضا و یا پوشش بیمه ای شما از طریق Premera Blue Cross باشد. به تاریخ های مهم در این اعلامیه توجه نمایید. شما ممکن است برای حفظ پوشش بیمه تان یا کمک در پرداخت هزینه های درمانی تان، به تاریخ های مشخصی برای انجام کارهای خاصی احتیاج داشته باشید. شما حق این را دارید که این اطلاعات و کمک را به زبان خود به طور رایگان دریافت نمایید. برای کسب اطلاعات با شماره 800-722-1471 (کلیران TTY تماس باشماره 800-842-5357) تماس برقرار نمایید.

**Polskie (Polish):**

To ogłoszenie może zawierać ważne informacje. To ogłoszenie może zawierać ważne informacje odnośnie Państwa wniosku lub zakresu świadczeń poprzez Premera Blue Cross. Prosimy zwrócić uwagę na kluczowe daty, które mogą być zawarte w tym ogłoszeniu aby nie przekroczyć terminów w przypadku utrzymania polisy ubezpieczeniowej lub pomocy związanej z kosztami. Macie Państwo prawo do bezpłatnej informacji we własnym języku. Zadzwońcie pod 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).

**Português (Portuguese):**

Este aviso contém informações importantes. Este aviso poderá conter informações importantes a respeito de sua aplicação ou cobertura por meio do Premera Blue Cross. Poderão existir datas importantes neste aviso. Talvez seja necessário que você tome providências dentro de determinados prazos para manter sua cobertura de saúde ou ajuda de custos. Você tem o direito de obter esta informação e ajuda em seu idioma e sem custos. Ligue para 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).

**Română (Romanian):**

Prezenta notificare conține informații importante. Această notificare poate conține informații importante privind cererea sau acoperirea asigurării dumneavoastră de sănătate prin Premera Blue Cross. Pot exista date cheie în această notificare. Este posibil să fie nevoie să acționați până la anumite termene limită pentru a vă menține acoperirea asigurării de sănătate sau asistența provizorie la costuri. Aveți dreptul de a obține gratuit aceste informații și ajutor în limba dumneavoastră. Sunați la 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).

**Русский (Russian):**

Настоящее уведомление содержит важную информацию. Это уведомление может содержать важную информацию о вашем заявлении или страховом покрытии через Premera Blue Cross. В настоящем уведомлении могут быть указаны ключевые даты. Вам, возможно, потребуется принять меры к определенным предельным срокам для сохранения страхового покрытия или помощи с расходами. Вы имеете право на бесплатное получение этой информации и помощь на вашем языке. Звоните по телефону 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).

**Fa'asamoa (Samoan):**

Atonu ua iai i lenei fa'asilasilaga ni fa'amatalaga e sili ona taua e tatau ona e malamalama i ai. O lenei fa'asilasilaga o se fesoasoani e fa'amatala atili i ai i le tulaga o le polokalame, Premera Blue Cross, ua e tau fia maua atu i ai. Fa'amolemole, ia e iloilo fa'alelei i aso fa'apitoa olo'o iai i lenei fa'asilasilaga taua. Masalo o le'a iai ni feau e tatau ona e faia ao le'i aulia le aso ua ta'ua i lenei fa'asilasilaga ina ia e iai pea ma maua fesoasoani mai ai i le polokalame a le Malo olo'o e iai i ai. Olo'o iai iate oe le aia tatau e maua atu i lenei fa'asilasilaga ma lenei fa'matalaga i legagana e te malamalama i ai aunoa ma se togiga tupe. Vili atu i le telefoni 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).

**Español (Spanish):**

Este Aviso contiene información importante. Es posible que este aviso contenga información importante acerca de su solicitud o cobertura a través de Premera Blue Cross. Es posible que haya fechas clave en este aviso. Es posible que deba tomar alguna medida antes de determinadas fechas para mantener su cobertura médica o ayuda con los costos. Usted tiene derecho a recibir esta información y ayuda en su idioma sin costo alguno. Llame al 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).

**Tagalog (Tagalog):**

Ang Paunawa na ito ay naglalaman ng mahalagang impormasyon tungkol sa iyong aplikasyon o pagsakop sa pamamagitan ng Premera Blue Cross. Maaaring may mga mahalagang petsa dito sa paunawa. Maaring mangailangan ka na magsagawa ng hakbang sa ilang mga itinakdang panahon upang mapanatili ang iyong pagsakop sa kalusugan o tulong na walang gastos. May karapatan ka na makakuha ng ganiitong impormasyon at tulong sa iyong wika ng walang gastos. Tumawag sa 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).

**ไทย (Thai):**

ประกาศนี้มีข้อมูลสำคัญ ประกาศนี้อาจมีข้อมูลที่สำคัญเกี่ยวกับกาการสมัครหรือขอบเขตประกันสุขภาพของคุณผ่าน Premera Blue Cross และอาจมีกำหนดการในประกาศนี้ คุณอาจจะต้องดำเนินการภายในกำหนดระยะเวลาที่แน่นอนเพื่อจะรักษาการประกันสุขภาพของคุณหรือการช่วยเหลือที่มีค่าใช้จ่าย คุณมีสิทธิที่จะได้รับข้อมูลและความช่วยเหลือในภาษาของคุณโดยไม่มีค่าใช้จ่าย โทร 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357)

**Український (Ukrainian):**

Це повідомлення містить важливу інформацію. Це повідомлення може містити важливу інформацію про Ваше звернення щодо страховального покриття через Premera Blue Cross. Зверніть увагу на ключові дати, які можуть бути вказані у цьому повідомленні. Існує імовірність того, що Вам треба буде здійснити певні кроки у конкретні кінцеві строки для того, щоб зберегти Ваше медичне страхування або отримати фінансову допомогу. У Вас є право на отримання цієї інформації та допомоги безкоштовно на Вашій рідній мові. Дзвоніть за номером телефону 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).

**Tiếng Việt (Vietnamese):**

Thông báo này cung cấp thông tin quan trọng. Thông báo này có thông tin quan trọng về đơn xin tham gia hoặc hợp đồng bảo hiểm của quý vị qua chương trình Premera Blue Cross. Xin xem ngày quan trọng trong thông báo này. Quý vị có thể phải thực hiện theo thông báo đúng trong thời hạn để duy trì bảo hiểm sức khỏe hoặc được trợ giúp thêm về chi phí. Quý vị có quyền được biết thông tin này và được trợ giúp bằng ngôn ngữ của mình miễn phí. Xin gọi số 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).