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Developed By: Medical Criteria Committee	

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**Description:**

Varicose veins are enlarged, twisted, superficial dilated blood vessels caused by a weakening in the vessel or valve wall. This is a common condition in which the veins and valves have permanently lost their ability to maintain the normal upward flow of blood and instead allow reversal of blood flow. When conservative therapies are no longer effective, other treatment options may include surgical removal, radiofrequency endovenous occlusion, endovenous laser ablation of the saphenous vein, or injection of a sclerosing solution into the varicosity.

**Criteria:**

I. ODS will cover varicose vein excision, ligation, stripping, radiofrequency endovenous occlusion (VNUS procedure), endovenous laser ablation of the saphenous vein (ELAS), also known as endovenous laser therapy (ELVT), transilluminated powered phlebectomy (TIPP), sclerotherapy or ambulatory phlebectomy to plan limitations when the following criteria are met:

- A. Documentation of conservative management attempts (of at least 6 consecutive weeks) and failures including **all** of the following:
1. The use of prescription support stockings of at least 20-30 mm Hg; and
  2. Treatment of related condition associated with or causing fluid retention, if applicable

**AND** the presence of one of the following:

3. Recurrent thrombophlebitis; or
4. Significant pain despite conservative management attributable to the varicose veins

**OR**

- B. The presence of **one** of the following:
1. Intractable ulceration secondary to venous stasis; or
  2. More than one episode of minor hemorrhage from a ruptured superficial varicosity; or
  3. A single significant hemorrhage from a ruptured superficial varicosity

II. Subfascial endoscopic perforator surgery (SEPS) will be covered to plan limitations when **all** of the following criteria are met:

- A. Doppler evaluation and/or duplex ultrasonography documents the presence of the incompetent perforator vein; and
- B. Documentation of conservative management attempts and failures, including leg elevation and the use of support stockings; and
- C. Documentation of at least **one** of the following conditions:
  1. Venous stasis dermatitis/ulceration
  2. Chronic venous insufficiency

**Limitations for Sclerotherapy:**

- I. Sclerotherapy is not covered for the treatment of the saphenofemoral junction or the saphenous veins as it has been shown to be ineffective for the treatment of large veins. Sclerotherapy is not

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covered for patients with reflux at the saphenofemoral or saphenopopliteal junctions. Sclerotherapy is covered for small to medium sized veins (<6mm in diameter) when the above criteria has been met. If the criteria are met, 3 initial sclerotherapy sessions will be authorized.

**Not Covered:**

- I. Sclerotherapy for the treatment of spider veins or telangiectasia is considered cosmetic and not a covered benefit.
- II. ODS does not cover the following varicose vein treatments as they are considered experimental and investigation:
  - A. Non-compressive sclerotherapy
  - B. Intense pulsed-light source (photothermal sclerosis)
  - C. Transdermal laser therapy
  - D. SEPS for the treatment of members with post-thrombotic syndrome or with mild to moderate venous disease.

**Information to be Submitted with Pre-Authorization Request:**

- History and physical from the treating physician
- Medical records documenting conservative therapy attempts and failures
- Diagnostic study results such as duplex ultrasonography, doppler exam, or other venous study
- Photographs if available

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