GUIDELINES
This policy does not certify benefits or authorization of benefits, which is designated by each individual policyholder contract. Paramount applies coding edits to all medical claims through coding logic software to evaluate the accuracy and adherence to accepted national standards. This guideline is solely for explaining correct procedure reporting and does not imply coverage and reimbursement.

DESCRIPTION
Radiofrequency ablation (RFA) treatment is a minimally invasive procedure that has been used for over three decades in treating various chronic pain syndromes such as trigeminal neuralgia, post-herpetic neuralgia, low back pain (LBP), and complex regional pain syndrome/reflex sympathetic dystrophy. It is a palliative treatment not without complications. Radiofrequency procedures have been reported to be associated with high number of complications compared with other ablative neurosurgical techniques. Furthermore, conventional RFA treatment occasionally results in worsening and even new onset of pain.

The use of pulsed RFA a non- or minimally-neurodestructive and thus less painful technique, serves as an alternative to conventional RF therapy. Pulsed radiofrequency treatment, performed under fluoroscopic guidance, entails the use of pulsed time cycle that delivers short bursts of RF energy to nervous tissue.

Water-cooled RFA devices generate heat using radio waves and are often used for radiofrequency denervation (RFD) in nerve tissue. The radio waves are delivered to the targeted nerves via needles inserted through the skin. Sterile water pumped through the device circulates and cools the radiofrequency probe, allowing treatment of an area larger than conventional RFD. The tip of the needle heats the surrounding tissue.

The available evidence on the effectiveness of pulsed and water-cooled RFA in the treatment of patients with various chronic pain syndromes is largely based on retrospective, case series studies. There is insufficient published evidence to inform conclusions regarding the safety and efficacy for use of the Coolief Cooled Radiofrequency (RF) System for treatment of hip or knee pain. Clinical value needs to be examined in well-designed, randomized controlled trials with large sample size and long-term follow-up.

POLICY
Pulsed and water-cooled radiofrequency ablations are non-covered.

HMO, PPO, Individual Marketplace, Elite, Advantage
Paramount considers pulsed and water-cooled radiofrequency ablations experimental and investigational for all indications, including those in the following list, because its effectiveness has not been established.

- Chronic pain following inguinal herniotomy
- Discogenic pain
- Face and head pain
- Facet and sacroiliac joint arthropathy
- Headache
- Inguinal neuralgia
- Low back pain
- Lower extremity neuralgia
- Lumbo-sacral radicular syndrome
- Metatarsal-phalangeal joint pain
- Morton’s neuroma
- Myofascial or neuromatous pain
- Neck pain
- Occipital neuralgia
- Orchalgia
- Osteoarthritis of the knee
- Pain associated with tumors involving peripheral nerves
- Pelvic pain
- Plantar fasciitis
Post-herpetic itch
Post-herpetic neuralgia
Premature ejaculation
Pudendal neuralgia
Reflex sympathetic dystrophy/complex regional pain syndrome
Sacro-iliac joint pain
Shoulder pain
Tarsal tunnel syndrome
Testicular pain (orchialgia)
Thoracic pain
Trapezio-metacarpal joint pain
Trigeminal neuralgia
Urinary urgency and hesitancy
Vulvodynia
Zygapophyseal joint pain

CODING/BILLING INFORMATION
The appearance of a code in this section does not necessarily indicate coverage. Codes that are covered may have selection criteria that must be met. Payment for supplies may be included in payment for other services rendered.

CPT CODES

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<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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TAWG REVIEW DATES: 02/26/2016, 04/21/2017

REVISION HISTORY EXPLANATION
02/26/16: Policy created to reflect most current clinical evidence per The Technology Assessment Working Group (TAWG).
04/21/17: Policy reviewed and revised to reflect most current clinical evidence per The Technology Assessment Working Group (TAWG).

REFERENCES/RESOURCES
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS Manual System and other CMS publications and services
Ohio Department of Medicaid http://jfs.ohio.gov/
American Medical Association, Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) and associated publications and services
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System, HCPCS Release and Code Sets
Industry Standard Review
Hayes, Inc.