OVERVIEW
Glaucoma is an ocular disorder that leads to an optic neuropathy characterized by changes in the optic nerve head (optic disk) that is associated with loss of visual sensitivity and field. The two major types of glaucoma are open-angle and closed-angle. Primary open-angle glaucoma (OAG) is the most common type of glaucoma, affecting up to 3 million individuals in the US. Reduction of intraocular pressure (IOP) is essential. An elevated IOP of > 22 mmHg (ocular hypertension, [OH]) may be treated even in the absence of nerve damage, especially in patients with other risk factors for glaucoma (e.g., severe myopia, Black race, family history of glaucoma). Reduction of IOP prevents progression or even onset of glaucoma. Alpha adrenergic agents work to reduce IOP by decreasing production of aqueous humor and increasing uveoscleral outflow.

POLICY STATEMENT
A preferred step therapy program has been developed to encourage the use of a Step 1 product prior to the use of a Step 2 product. If the preferred step therapy rule is not met for a Step 2 agent at the point of service, coverage will be determined by the preferred step therapy criteria below. All approvals are provided for 1 year in duration.

AUTOMATION:  Patients with a history of one Step 1 drug within the 130-day look-back period are excluded from step therapy.

Step 1:  Generic brimonidine tartrate 0.15% ophthalmic solution, generic brimonidine tartrate 0.2% ophthalmic solution, generic apraclonidine 0.5% ophthalmic solution, Alphagan P 0.1%

Step 2:  Alphagan P 0.15%, Iopidine 0.5%, Iopidine 1%

CRITERIA
1.  If the patient has tried one Step 1 product, authorization for a Step 2 product may be given.

2.  Authorization may be given for Iopidine 1% in patients undergoing argon laser trabeculoplasty, argon laser iridotomy or Nd:YAG posterior capsulotomy.

3.  No other exceptions are recommended.

References
- Alphagan® 0.1% and 0.15% ophthalmic solution [prescribing information]. Irvine, CA: Allergan, Inc.; September 2013.
- Iopidine® 0.5% ophthalmic solution [prescribing information]. Fort Worth, TX: Alcon Laboratories, Inc.; December 2003.
- Iopidine® 1% ophthalmic solution [prescribing information]. Fort Worth, TX: Alcon Laboratories, Inc.; December 2004.