

Medical Coverage Policy | Coverage of Complications Following A Non-covered Service



EFFECTIVE DATE: 4|1|2014

POLICY LAST UPDATED: 3|2|2015

OVERVIEW

This policy documents the intent for reimbursement of services supplied for the treatment of medical complications occurring after a non-covered medical service.

MEDICAL CRITERIA

None

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION

None

POLICY STATEMENT

BlueCHiP for Medicare and Commercial

Coverage is subject to terms, conditions, and limitation of the member's contract. The treatment of medical and surgical complications is considered medically necessary and, therefore, is covered when, if left untreated, the complication would endanger the health of the individual. Medical and surgical complications include, but are not limited to, complications resulting from cosmetic or other non-covered procedures. Treatment is covered and eligible for reimbursement consideration based on the medical necessity for acute conditions such as, but not limited to;

- Deep vein thrombosis (DVT)
- Hemorrhage
- Infection
- Myocardial infarction (MI)
- Wound dehiscence

Outcomes following cosmetic procedures that have unsatisfactory cosmetic results are not considered medical or surgical complications and are, therefore, not covered.

COVERAGE

Benefits vary between groups/contracts. Please refer to the appropriate Evidence of Coverage or Subscriber Agreement for a list of non-covered conditions if approved, then coverage will be based on the applicable benefit.

BACKGROUND

A complication is an adverse event that occurs in the course of another condition or during its treatment. Complications may be of either medical or surgical origin, may modify the course of the original condition, and may require revisions to the treatment plan.

Medical and/or surgical therapy for untoward events may be necessary to correct functional impairment of a body part or system. Additionally, medical and/or surgical therapy for untoward events may be therapeutic for purposes that coincidentally also serve a cosmetic purpose (e.g., treatment of severe burns following accidental trauma). Typically, cosmetic services are those provided to improve an individual's physical appearance, from which no significant improvement in physiologic function can be expected. Emotional and/or psychological improvement does not constitute improvement in physiologic function.

Non-covered services include surgery considered experimental/investigational or cosmetic in nature; procedures performed at an inappropriate facility; and a surgery performed by an unlicensed or uncredentialed provider. The subscriber agreement does not cover services that may otherwise be considered covered when provided with a non-covered service, or as part of a non-covered regimen of care.

Regimen of care is a regulated course, such as diet, exercise, or manner of living, intended to preserve or restore health or to attain some result.

Covered healthcare services means any service, treatment, procedure, facility, equipment, drug, device, or supply that we have reviewed and determined is eligible for reimbursement under the members' subscriber agreement.

The Advance Notice of Non-coverage (ANN) is a written notice given to a member to indicate that the service will not be covered by the member's insurance. Providers who must issue an ANN include physicians, laboratories, hospice providers, inpatient/outpatient hospitals, durable medical equipment (DME) providers, skilled nursing facilities (SNF), hospice providers, and home health providers.

Providers should complete an ANN to notify members in advance of:

- **Initiation of services:** the beginning of a new patient encounter, start of a plan of care, or beginning of treatment; OR
- **Reduction of services:** a decrease in the frequency or duration of a component of care. For example, a patient is receiving physical therapy five days a week and wishes to continue this frequency; however the treating provider believes that the patient's therapy goals can be met with only three days of therapy weekly; OR
- **Termination of services:** discontinuation of items/services. For example, a patient receives speech therapy and the treating provider determines that the therapy is no longer reasonable and necessary; however the patient wishes to continue to receive speech therapy that the provider believes to be non-covered items or services.

If a written advance notice is not given to the member, the provider is financially liable for the service/item provided to the member.

CODING

None

RELATED POLICIES

Coding and Payment Guidelines

PUBLISHED

Provider Update, May 2015

Provider Update, Aug 2014

REFERENCES

1. http://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNProducts/downloads/Items_and_Services_Not_Covered_Under_Medicare_BookletICN906765.pdf

[CLICK THE ENVELOPE ICON BELOW TO SUBMIT COMMENTS](#)

This medical policy is made available to you for informational purposes only. It is not a guarantee of payment or a substitute for your medical judgment in the treatment of your patients. Benefits and eligibility are determined by the member's subscriber agreement or member certificate and/or the employer agreement, and those documents will supersede the provisions of this medical policy. For information on member-specific benefits, call the provider call center. If you provide services to a member which are determined to not be medically necessary (or in some cases medically necessary services which are non-covered benefits), you may not charge the member for the services unless you have informed the member and they have agreed in writing in advance to continue with the treatment at their own expense. Please refer to your participation agreement(s) for the applicable provisions. This policy is current at the time of publication; however, medical practices, technology, and knowledge are constantly changing. BCBSRI reserves the right to review and revise this policy for any reason and at any time, with or without notice. Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

