



PALLIATIVE CARE

Effective Date: September 21, 2009

Review Dates: 8/09

Date Of Origin: August 12, 2009

Status: New

I. DESCRIPTION

The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) defines palliative care as treatment that enhances comfort and improves the quality of an individual's life during the last phase of life. No specific therapy is excluded from consideration. The test of palliative care lies in the agreement between the individual, physician(s), primary caregiver, and the care team, that the expected outcome is relief from distressing symptoms, the easing of pain, and/or the enhancing of the quality of life.

Palliative care may be provided in the home, hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, or nursing homes by palliative care teams, hospice organizations, or palliative care specialists. Unlike hospice care, palliative care may include potentially curative treatments and there is no requirement for life expectancy parameters.

II. POLICY/CRITERIA

A. Priority Health covers palliative care, including the following services:

1. Palliative care consultation.
2. Potentially curative treatments.
3. Palliative care in the home: Routine intermittent skilled services are covered in the member's home for the member and his/her family.
4. Palliative care in a basic nursing home or residential facility: Routine intermittent skilled services are covered. Room and board is not a covered benefit.
5. Inpatient care: Short-term inpatient care is covered when necessary for skilled nursing needs that cannot be provided in other settings. Inpatient care provided either in an acute care facility, or skilled nursing facility is subject to the "Skilled Nursing/Rehabilitation/Inpatient Hospice" benefit maximum days. Prior authorization is required.



- B. The following services are not skilled nursing care services and are not a covered benefit if billed, but they may be included in the per diem agreement with the palliative care organization/provider.
1. Homemaker or caretaker services, and any services or supplies not solely related to the care of the member, including, but not limited to, sitter or companion services for the member who is ill or other members of the family, transportation, housecleaning, and maintenance of the house.
 2. Respite care.
 3. Home health aide or custodial care without a skilled need.
- C. Non-covered services:
1. Room and board charges in facilities, including basic nursing homes, unless there are skilled nursing needs as defined in section A5.
 2. Experimental and investigational care or services.
- D. Conditions that may prompt palliative care planning include those conditions listed on **Table 1** (next page) and are not intended to be an all-inclusive list.



Table 1*

Debility/Failure to Thrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater than three chronic conditions in patient over 75 years old • Functional decline • Weight loss • Patient/family desire for low-yield therapy • Patient with poor social support • Increasing frequency of outpatient visits, emergency department visits, hospitalizations • Assisted living/long-term care
Cancer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncontrolled symptoms due to cancer or treatment • Introduced at time of diagnosis – if disease likely incurable • Introduced when disease progresses despite therapy
Heart Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage III or IV heart failure despite optimal medical management • Angina refractory to medical or interventional management • Frequent emergency department visits or hospital admissions • Frequent discharges from implanted defibrillators despite optimal device and antiarrhythmic management
Pulmonary Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxygen-dependent, O₂ sats less than 88% on room air • Unintentional weight loss • Dyspnea with minimal to moderate exertion • Other pulmonary diagnoses, e.g., pulmonary fibrosis, pulmonary hypertension
Dementia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refractory behavioral problems • Feeding problems – weight loss • Caregiver stress – support needed • Frequency of emergency department visits • Increased safety concerns
Liver Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased need for paracentesis for removal of ascitic fluid • Increased confusion (hepatic encephalopathy) • Increased safety concerns • Symptomatic disease
Renal Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialysis • Stage IV or Stage V kidney disease
Neurologic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stroke • Parkinson's • ALS – amyotrophic lateral sclerosis • MS – multiple sclerosis

* Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement, Palliative Care, May 2008
http://www.icsi.org/palliative_care/palliative_care_11918.html

III. MEDICAL NECESSITY REVIEW

Required for inpatient/home care Not Required Not Applicable



IV. APPLICATION TO PRODUCTS

Coverage is subject to member’s specific benefits. Group specific policy will supersede this policy when applicable.

- ❖ **HMO/EPO:** *This policy applies to insured HMO/EPO plans.*
- ❖ **POS:** *This policy applies to insured POS plans.*
- ❖ **PPO:** *This policy applies to insured PPO plans.*
- ❖ **ASO:** *For self-funded plans, consult individual plan documents. If there is a conflict between this policy and a self-funded plan document, the provisions of the plan document will govern.*
- ❖ **INDIVIDUAL:** *For individual policies, consult the individual insurance policy. If there is a conflict between this medical policy and the individual insurance policy document, the provisions of the individual insurance policy will govern.*
- ❖ **MEDICARE:** *Coverage is determined by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).*
- ❖ **MEDICAID:** *Coverage is determined by the Michigan Medicaid Provider Manual and the Michigan Medicaid Fee Schedule at: http://www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-2945_42542_42543_42546_42551-159815--,00.html.*
- ❖ **MICHILD:** *For MICHILD members, this policy will apply unless MICHILD certificate of coverage limits or extends coverage.*

V. CODING INFORMATION

ICD-9 Diagnosis Codes: *not specified – list primary condition*

CPT/HCPCS Codes:

Bill appropriate Evaluation and Management CPT code for the setting where the care takes place.

99201 – 99215, 99241 – 99245	Office
99217 - 99239, 99251 – 99255	Hospital
99304 – 99340	Other facility setting
99341 – 99350	Home

VI. REFERENCES

National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO)
<http://www.nhpc.org/i4a/pages/Index.cfm?pageID=5308>

Brunnhuber, K. et.al. Putting evidence into practice: Palliative care. BMJ Group. 2008

Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement, Palliative Care, May 2008
http://www.icsi.org/palliative_care/palliative_care_11918.html



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