

Health Plan of Washington

UTILIZATION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINE – 11.01.510 Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF): Admission, Continued Stay, and Transition of Care Guideline

Effective Date:	May 1, 2024	RELATED MEDICAL POLICIES:
Last Revised:	April 8, 2024	None
Replaces:	N/A	

Select a hyperlink below to be directed to that section.

COVERAGE GUIDELINES | DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS | CODING RELATED INFORMATION | REFERENCES | HISTORY

Clicking this icon returns you to the hyperlinks menu above.

Introduction

Skilled nursing care is a high level of care that can only be provided by trained and licensed professionals, like registered nurses (RNs), licensed professional nurses (LPNs), medical directors, and physical, occupational, and speech therapists. Skilled care is short-term and helps people get back on their feet after injury or illness. It is often given in a skilled nursing facility. A skilled nursing facility can be a separate facility or a distinct unit within another institution. After being released from the hospital, a person is transferred to a skilled nursing facility for hands-on care. This can be either medical care or rehabilitation care — and sometimes both. A broad definition of skilled care is medically necessary care that can only be done by a skilled, trained, and licensed nurse or therapist. If the care can be done by a home health aide (someone who assists with the activities of daily living, like eating or bathing) or a person who doesn't need to be licensed, it's not considered to be skilled nursing facility may be considered medically necessary.

Note: The Introduction section is for your general knowledge and is not to be taken as policy coverage criteria. The rest of the policy uses specific words and concepts familiar to medical professionals. It is intended for providers. A provider can be a person, such as a doctor, nurse, psychologist, or dentist. A provider also can be a place where medical care is given, like a hospital, clinic, or lab. This policy informs them about when a service may be covered.

Subject	Medical Necessity
Clinical Indications for Admission	
Admission	 Admission to a skilled nursing facility (SNF) may be considered medically necessary when ALL of the following criteria are met: Skilled services are provided under the supervision of a physician and delivered by a qualified and licensed provider AND Care plans specify individual realistic goals and discharge plans AND Skilled services are medically necessary and cannot be provided in a lower level of care setting AND Provided services are expected to result in measurable and significant improvement in the individual's condition within a reasonable time frame AND Individual is medically stable AND
	 One or more skilled therapies or skilled nursing services are given at least daily Skilled nursing services must include ALL of the following: Services are at an intensity and frequency that cannot be provided at a lower level of care Documented weekly physician face-to-face evaluations are performed, including consults as needed Individual and/or caregiver demonstrate ability and willingness to participate in care plan, including training. Physician supervised, skilled nursing services for monitoring, evaluation and intervention to address recent illness, injury, disease or surgical procedure are required AND Skilled nursing services may include ONE or more of the following:



Subject	Medical Necessity
Clinical Indications for Ad	mission
	 IV* or IM* injection of drugs given at least every 12 hours (and they cannot be provided at a lower level of care) Parental feeding (TPN) or enteral feeding, (e.g., nasogastric, gastrostomy or jejunostomy)** requiring intervention or management of a complication Active management of a complex medication regimen (may be oral) to include documented monitoring Active management of an exacerbation of chronic disease conditions Complex wound care of stage 3 or 4 or multiple stage 2 decubitus ulcer(s) (see definition below) or other complicated wounds requiring aseptic, daily dressing changes Ostomy complication requiring intervention which may include patient/care-giver training that cannot be provided in an alternative care setting (home, outpatient, etc.) Device or drain management, including initial care of urinary or wound drain catheters (such as bladder irrigation, nephrostomy tube, suprapubic catheter or JP***/biliary drains) Ventilator and/or tracheostomy weaning New respiratory treatment or new use of oxygen; or nasopharyngeal or deep tracheal suctioning (superficial, oropharyngeal suctioning is not a skilled service) to stabilize an acute medical/respiratory condition
	AND/OR
	 Skilled therapy services must include ALL of the following: One or more therapy modality given at least 5 days/week for at least 1 hour daily to treat a documented decline in functional status due to recent illness, injury, disease, or surgical procedure Prior level of function is described in skilled therapy evaluation. A functional impairment requiring at least minimum assistance for skilled therapy services



Subject	Medical Necessity	
Clinical Indications for Ad	or Admission	
	 AND Rehabilitation services may include ONE or more of the following : Gait evaluation and training Transfer training ADL training Speech and swallowing restoration Cognitive training Therapeutic treatment to ensure patient safety AND Individual is able to actively participate (i.e., responsive to verbal/visual stimuli and able to follow simple commands) and demonstrates rehabilitation potential. 	
	 Note: * IV (intravenous), IM (intramuscular) Note: ** NG (nasogastric), G-tube (gastrostomy), J-tube, (jejunostomy) Note: ***JP (Jackson-Pratt drain) Admission or continued stay to a skilled nursing facility may be considered NOT medically necessary when: Skilled services can be managed at a lower level of care Services are for a custodial level of care or for a maintenance program when no further functional progress has been made within a reasonable period of time, nor is expected Individual is not willing or able to participate in a therapeutic treatment program Services are for routine medication administration (including IV, IM, and SQ) for medically stable individuals without other skilled needs 	
	 Care is for routine indwelling bladder catheters or established colostomy or ileostomy, gastrostomy tube feedings, tracheostomy site care, oxygen therapy Care of the confused or disoriented individual who is under an established medication regimen Care is primarily for assisting in activities of daily living 	



Subject	Medical Necessity
Clinical Indications for Continued Stay	
Continued Stay	Ongoing assessment and management of an unstable condition or complex medical condition is considered medically necessary when the above criteria and ONE of the following criteria is met:Skilled Nursing Services• IV or IM* injection of drugs given at least every 12 hours (and
	 they cannot be provided at a lower level of care) Initiation of IV TPN feeding or tube feedings (NG, G-tube, or J-tube**) or when documented difficulties or complications exist requiring changes in intervention. Complex medication (may be oral) adjustment in dosage or type of medication with documentation (such as lab values, vital signs, etc.) of the unstable condition or complications being treated Treatment of a Stage 3 or 4 or multiple stage 2 decubitus ulcer(s) (see definition below) or other complicated wound requiring daily, aseptic dressing changes that cannot be provided at a lower level of care At least weekly wound assessment with progression of healing documented If there is lack of progression, a change in management
	 of the wound is documented Ostomy care, related to complications that cannot be provided in an alternative care setting (home, outpatient, etc.) Ventilator and/or tracheostomy weaning, with documented trials and progression towards weaning of respiratory support. New respiratory treatment at least 3 times/day; or new use of oxygen; or nasopharyngeal or deep tracheal suctioning (superficial, oropharyngeal suctioning is not a skilled service) to stabilize an acute medical/respiratory condition. New or worsening mental status change with documented physician-supervised intervention New or worsening behavioral symptoms with documented physician-supervised intervention for behavior modification and/or mental health consult as needed.



Subject	Medical Necessity
Clinical Indications for Continued Stay	
	Note: * IV (intravenous), IM (intramuscular) Note: ** NG (nasogastric), G-tube (gastrostomy), J-tube, (jejunostomy) OR
	 Skilled Therapy Services The individual demonstrates documented measurable, restorative and continuing gains towards outlined therapy goals (of at least one discipline) which cannot be provided at a
	 lower level of care; OR There is documented medical instability affecting participation or progression along with intervention to resolve or stabilize it (this is short term for 1-3 days).

Clinical Indications for Transition of Care	
Transition of care	Transition from a skilled nursing facility (SNF) to an alternate
	level of care may be considered medically necessary when ALL
	of the following criteria are met:
	• Ongoing skilled nursing services needed can be safely provided
	in a home setting with home health or outpatient care
	AND
	• The individual has no signs of infection or is stable on an anti-
	infective regimen which can be administered outpatient
	AND
	The individual is clinically stable
	AND
	• The individual is stable on an adequate nutritional program
	(e.g., parenteral infusion can be managed by a home infusion
	provider or enteral feedings can safely be provided at home)
	AND
	Pain management is adequate without need for frequent
	change in medication or dose
	AND

Clinical Indications for Transition of Care		
•	Neurologic status is stable with mentation at baseline,	
	appropriate for patient's clinical condition.	
Α	AND	
•	If patient is in SNF primarily for rehabilitative services:	
	 Further progress toward rehabilitation goals is not expected 	
	or can be achieved at a lower level of care or	
	 Patient is no longer willing or able to participate in a 	
	therapeutic treatment program	

Documentation Requirements

The individual's medical records submitted for review for all conditions should document that medical necessity criteria are met. The record should include the following:

- Transferring facility/provider (i.e., hospital) admission and discharge assessment; therapy assessment
- The preliminary treatment plan

AND

- Post SNF admission documentation in the form of clinical notes and/or treatment logs including the following:
- Clinical and rehabilitation status as applicable
- Treatment(s) received, including frequency and length of treatment period, as applicable
- Patient participation and progress toward clinical and rehabilitation goals
- o Patient/caregiver training progress towards goals
- o Patient/caregiver participation in discharge planning; and
- o Status of the discharge plan, including targeted site, date, and skilled needs, if applicable

Coding

N/A

Related Information



This guideline incorporates clinical, facility, and care-based indicators to determine the appropriateness of admission to a skilled nursing facility level of care. In addition, transitions of care guidelines are given as indicators to determine if the individual may be appropriate for safe transfer from a skilled nursing facility to a home or an alternate setting.

A skilled nursing facility (SNF) is a facility, or distinct part of a facility, that provides skilled nursing care and/or skilled rehabilitative therapy. Usually, a patient will transition to a SNF from an acute care facility when ongoing skilled needs cannot be provided in a home or other alternate setting.

Definition of Terms

Pressure Injury Stages (National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel, 2016)⁷

Pressure Injury: A pressure injury is localized damage to the skin and/or underlying soft tissue usually over a bony prominence or related to medical or other devices. The injury occurs as a result of intense and/or prolonged pressure or pressure in combination with shear. The tolerance of soft tissue for pressure and shear may also be affected by microclimate, nutrition, perfusion, co-morbidities, and conditions of soft tissue.

Pressure Injury Stages

• Stage 1 Pressure Injury - Non-Blanchable Erythema Of Intact Skin:

Intact skin with a localized area of non-blanchable erythema, which may appear differently in darkly pigmented skin. Presence of blanchable erythema or changes in sensation, temperature, or firmness may precede visible changes. Color changes do not include purple or maroon discoloration; these may indicate deep tissue pressure injury.

• Stage 2 Pressure Injury - Partial-Thickness Skin Loss With Exposed Dermis:

Partial-thickness loss of skin with exposed dermis. The wound bed is viable, pink or red, moist, and may also present as an intact or ruptured serum-filled blister. Adipose (fat) is not visible and deeper tissues are not visible. Granulation tissue, slough and eschar are not present. These injuries commonly result from adverse microclimate and shear in the skin over the pelvis and shear in the heel. This stage should not be used to describe moisture associated skin damage (MASD) including incontinence associated dermatitis (IAD), intertriginous dermatitis (ITD),

medical adhesive related skin injury (MARSI), or traumatic wounds (for example, skin tears, burns, abrasions).

• Stage 3 Pressure Injury - Full-Thickness Skin Loss:

Full-thickness loss of skin, in which adipose (fat) is visible in the ulcer and granulation tissue and epibole (rolled wound edges) are often present. Slough and/or eschar may be visible. The depth of tissue damage varies by anatomical location; areas of significant adiposity can develop deep wounds. Undermining and tunneling may occur. Fascia, muscle, tendon, ligament, cartilage and/or bone are not exposed. If slough or eschar obscures the extent of tissue loss this is an unstageable Pressure Injury

• Stage 4 Pressure Injury- Full-Thickness Skin And Tissue Loss:

Full-thickness skin and tissue loss with exposed or directly palpable fascia, muscle, tendon, ligament, cartilage or bone in the ulcer. Slough and/or eschar may be visible. Epibole (rolled edges), undermining and/or tunneling often occur. Depth varies by anatomical location. If slough or eschar obscures the extent of tissue loss this is an unstageable Pressure Injury.

• Unstageable Pressure Injury- Obscured Full-Thickness Skin And Tissue Loss:

Full-thickness skin and tissue loss in which the extent of tissue damage within the ulcer cannot be confirmed because it is obscured by slough or eschar. If slough or eschar is removed, a Stage 3 or Stage 4 pressure injury will be revealed. Stable eschar (that is, dry, adherent, intact without erythema or fluctuance) on the heel or ischemic limb should not be softened or removed.

• Deep Tissue Pressure Injury- Persistent Non-Blanchable Deep Red, Maroon Or Purple Discoloration:

Intact or non-intact skin with localized area of persistent non-blanchable deep red, maroon, purple discoloration or epidermal separation revealing a dark wound bed or blood filled blister. Pain and temperature change often precede skin color changes. Discoloration may appear differently in darkly pigmented skin. This injury results from intense and/or prolonged pressure and shear forces at the bone-muscle interface. The wound may evolve rapidly to reveal the actual extent of tissue injury, or may resolve without tissue loss. If necrotic tissue, subcutaneous tissue, granulation tissue, fascia, muscle or other underlying structures are visible, this indicates a full thickness pressure injury (Unstageable, Stage 3 or Stage 4). Do not use deep tissue pressure injury (DTPI) to describe vascular, traumatic, neuropathic, or dermatologic conditions.

References

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History

Date	Comments
01/01/18	New Policy, returned from archived status, approved December 12, 2017. Policy is reinstated and replaces InterQual criteria.
02/01/18	Interim Review, approved January 16, 2018. Added medically necessary criteria for continued stay in a SNF. References 6, 7 added. Added additional statements under admission, and edited statements under not medically necessary and transition of care for clarity.



Date	Comments
12/01/18	Annual Review, approved November 6, 2018. References removed and references 6-7 added. No change to policy statement.
11/01/19	Annual Review, approved October 4, 2019. Reference 3 updated. Policy statements unchanged.
10/01/20	Annual Review, approved September 1, 2020. UM Guideline reviewed. References updated. Guideline statements unchanged.
06/01/21	Annual Review, approved May 4, 2021. UM guideline reviewed. Guideline statements unchanged.
03/01/22	Annual Review, approved February 7, 2022. UM guideline reviewed. Guideline statements unchanged.
03/01/23	Annual Review, approved February 6, 2023. UM guideline reviewed. Guideline statements unchanged. Changed the wording from "patient" to "individual" throughout the policy for standardization.
05/01/24	Annual Review, approved April 8, 2024. UM guideline reviewed. References updated. Guideline statements unchanged.

Disclaimer: This medical policy is a guide in evaluating the medical necessity of a particular service or treatment. The Company adopts policies after careful review of published peer-reviewed scientific literature, national guidelines and local standards of practice. Since medical technology is constantly changing, the Company reserves the right to review and update policies as appropriate. Member contracts differ in their benefits. Always consult the member benefit booklet or contact a member service representative to determine coverage for a specific medical service or supply. CPT codes, descriptions and materials are copyrighted by the American Medical Association (AMA). ©2024 Premera All Rights Reserved.

Scope: Medical policies are systematically developed guidelines that serve as a resource for Company staff when determining coverage for specific medical procedures, drugs or devices. Coverage for medical services is subject to the limits and conditions of the member benefit plan. Members and their providers should consult the member benefit booklet or contact a customer service representative to determine whether there are any benefit limitations applicable to this service or supply. This medical policy does not apply to Medicare Advantage.





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Language Assistance

<u>ATENCIÓN</u>: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 800-817-3056 (TTY: 711). 注意:如果您使用繁體中文,您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 800-817-3056 (TTY: 711)。 <u>CHÚÝ</u>: Nếu bạn nói Tiếng Việt, có các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn. Gọi số 800-817-3056 (TTY: 711). <u>주의</u>: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다. 800-817-3056 (TTY: 711) 번으로 전화해 주십시오. <u>BHИМАНИЕ</u>: Если вы говорите на русском языке, то вам доступны бесплатные услуги перевода. Звоните 800-817-3056 (телетайп: 711). <u>PAUNAWA</u>: Кипg nagsasalita ka ng Tagalog, maaari kang gumamit ng mga serbisyo ng tulong sa wika nang walang bayad. Титаwag sa 800-817-3056 (TTY: 711). <u>УВАГА!</u> Якщо ви розмовляєте українською мовою, ви можете звернутися до безкоштовної служби мовної підтримки.

Телефонуйте за номером 800-817-3056 (телетайп: 711).

<u>ملحوظة:</u> إذا كنت تتحدث اذكر اللغة، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية تتوافر لك بالمجان. اتصل برقم 800-817-3056 (رقم هاتف الصم والبكم: 711). <u>पिਆਨ ਦਿਉ</u>: ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਬੋਲਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਸੇਵਾ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਮੁਫਤ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ। 800-817-3056 (TTY: 711) 'ਤੇ ਕਾਲ ਕਰੋ। <u>ACHTUNG</u>: Wenn Sie Deutsch sprechen, stehen Ihnen kostenlos sprachliche Hilfsdienstleistungen zur Verfügung. Rufnummer: 800-817-3056 (TTY: 711). <u>ਪਿਨਕਾਹ</u>: ຖ້າວ່າ ທ່ານເວົ້າພາສາ ລາວ, ການບໍລຶການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອດ້ານພາສາ, ໂດຍບໍ່ເສັງຄ່າ, ແມ່ນມືພ້ອມໃຫ້ທ່ານ. ໂທຣ 800-817-3056 (TTY: 711). <u>ATANSYON</u>: Si w pale Kreyòl Ayisyen, gen sèvis èd pou lang ki disponib gratis pou ou. Rele 800-817-3056 (TTY: 711).

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ATENÇÃO: Se fala português, encontram-se disponíveis serviços linguísticos, grátis. Ligue para 800-817-3056 (TTY: 711).

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