Coverage Summary

Educational Programs

Approved by: UnitedHealthcare Medicare Benefit Interpretation Committee  Last Review Date: 08/18/2020

Related Medicare Advantage Policy Guidelines:
- Institutional and Home Care Patient Education Programs (NCD 170.1)
- Medical Nutrition Therapy (NCD 180.1)

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The benefit information in this Coverage Summary is based on existing national coverage policy, however, Local Coverage Determinations (LCDs) may exist and compliance with these policies is required where applicable.

There are instances where this document may direct readers to a UnitedHealthcare Commercial Medical Policy, Medical Benefit Drug Policy, and/or Coverage Determination Guideline (CDG). In the absence of a Medicare National Coverage Determination (NCD), Local Coverage Determination (LCD), or other Medicare coverage guidance, CMS allows a Medicare Advantage Organization (MAO) to create its own coverage determinations, using objective evidence-based rationale relying on authoritative evidence (Medicare IOM Pub. No. 100-16, Ch. 4, §90.5).

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I. COVERAGE

Coverage Statement: Institutional and home care educational programs are covered when Medicare coverage criteria are met.

Guidelines/Notes:
1. Institutional or home care educational programs may be covered under for such programs furnished by providers of services (i.e., hospitals, SNFs, HHAs, and OPT providers) to the extent that the programs are appropriate, integral parts in the rendition of covered services which are reasonable and necessary for the treatment of the individual's illness or injury.

Examples include:
- Educational activities carried out by nurses such as teaching patients to give themselves injections, follow prescribed diets, administer colostomy care, administer medical gases, and carry out other inpatient care activities may be reimbursable as a part of covered routine nursing care.
- Teaching by an occupational therapist of compensatory techniques to improve a patient's...
level of independence in the activities of daily living may be reimbursed as a part of covered occupational therapy.

- Instruction of a patient in the carrying out of a maintenance program designed for him/her by a physical therapist may be reimbursed as part of covered physical therapy.

See the NCD for Institutional and Home Care Patient Education Programs (170.1). (Accessed August 10, 2020)

Note: Teaching and training services (also referred to as educational services) can be covered only where they provide knowledge essential for the chronically ill patient’s participation in his or her own treatment and only where they can be reasonably related to such treatment or diagnosis. Educational services that provide more elaborate instruction than is necessary to achieve the required level of patient education are not covered. After essential information has been provided, the patient should be relied upon to obtain additional information on his or her own. See the Medicare Benefit Manual, Chapter 15, §60.4 – Services Incident to a Physician’s Service to Homebound Patients Under General Physician Supervision. (Accessed August 10, 2020)

2. Educational activities not closely related to the care and treatment of the patient, such as programs directed toward instructing patients or the public generally in preventive health care activities are not covered since these are not reasonable and necessary for the treatment of an illness or injury.

Examples of non-covered programs include those designed to prevent illness by instructing the general public in the importance of good nutritional habits, exercise regimens, and good hygiene are not covered.

See the NCD for Institutional and Home Care Patient Education Programs (170.1). (Accessed August 10, 2020)

3. Nutritional counseling, i.e., Medical Nutritional Therapy (MNT) are covered when criteria are met. See the Coverage Summary for Diabetes Management, Equipment and Supplies.

4. Face to face Kidney Disease Education (KDE) services are covered when criteria are met. See the Coverage Summary for Preventive Health Services and Procedures.

II. DEFINITIONS

None.

III. REFERENCES

See above.

IV. REVISION HISTORY

08/18/2020  •  Routine review; no change to coverage guidelines