INPATIENT HOSPITAL PAIN REHABILITATION PROGRAMS (NCD 10.3)

Guideline Number: MPG159.04

Overview
Pain rehabilitation programs are an innovative approach to the treatment of intractable pain. The goal of such programs is to give a patient the tools to manage and control his/her pain and thereby improve his/her ability to function independently.

A hospital level pain rehabilitation program is one that employs a coordinated multidisciplinary team to deliver, in a controlled environment, a concentrated program that is designed to modify pain behavior through the treatment of the physiological, psychological and social aspects of pain. Such programs generally include diagnostic testing, skilled nursing, psychotherapy, structured progressive withdrawal from pain medications, physical therapy and occupational therapy to restore physical fitness (mobility and endurance) to a maximal level within the constraints of a patient's physical disability and the use of mechanical devices and/or activities to relieve pain or modify a patient's reaction to it (e.g., nerve stimulator, hydrotherapy, massage, ice, systemic muscle relaxation training and diversional activities). The nurse's responsibility in such pain rehabilitation programs is to observe and assess, on a continuing basis, a patient's condition and response to the program as reflected by their actions while in the nursing unit and to assure that the atmosphere within the unit is not supportive of pain behavior. The day-to-day activities involved in carrying out the program are under the general supervision and, as needed, direct supervision of a physician.

Guidelines
Since pain rehabilitation programs of a lesser scope than that described above would raise a question as to whether the program could be provided in a less intensive setting than on an inpatient hospital basis, carefully evaluate such programs to determine whether the program does, in fact, necessitate a hospital level of care. Some pain rehabilitation programs may utilize services and devices which are excluded from coverage, e.g., acupuncture dorsal column stimulator and family counseling services. In determining whether the scope of a pain program does necessitate inpatient hospital care, evaluate only those services and devices which are covered. Although diagnostic tests may be an appropriate part of pain rehabilitation programs, such tests would be covered in an individual case only where they can be reasonably related to a patient's illness, complaint, injury or symptom and where they do not represent an unnecessary duplication of tests previously performed.
An inpatient program of 4 weeks' duration is generally required to modify pain behavior. After this period it would be expected that any additional rehabilitation services which might be required could be effectively provided on an outpatient basis under an outpatient pain rehabilitation program (see §10.4 of the NCD Manual) or other outpatient program. The first 7-10 days of such an inpatient program constitute, in effect, an evaluation period. If a patient is unable to adjust to the program within this period, it is generally concluded that it is unlikely that the program will be effective and the patient is discharged from the program. On occasions a program longer than 4 weeks may be required in a particular case. In such a case there should be documentation to substantiate that inpatient care beyond a 4-week period was reasonable and necessary. Similarly, where it appears that a patient participating in a program is being granted frequent outside passes, a question would exist as to whether an inpatient program is reasonable and necessary for the treatment of the patient's condition.

An inpatient hospital stay for the purpose of participating in a pain rehabilitation program would be covered as reasonable and necessary to the treatment of a patient's condition where the pain is attributable to a physical cause, the usual methods of treatment have not been successful in alleviating it and a significant loss of ability to function independently has resulted from the pain. Chronic pain patients often have psychological problems which accompany or stem from the physical pain and it is appropriate to include psychological treatment in the multidisciplinary approach. Patients whose pain symptoms result from a mental condition, rather than from any physical cause, generally cannot be successfully treated in a pain rehabilitation program.

**PURPOSE**

The Medicare Advantage Policy Guideline documents are generally used to support UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage claims processing activities and facilitate providers’ submission of accurate claims for the specified services. The document can be used as a guide to help determine applicable:

- Medicare coding or billing requirements, and/or
- Medical necessity coverage guidelines; including documentation requirements.

UnitedHealthcare follows Medicare guidelines such as LCDs, NCDs, and other Medicare manuals for the purposes of determining coverage. It is expected providers retain or have access to appropriate documentation when requested to support coverage. Please utilize the links in the References section below to view the Medicare source materials used to develop this resource document. This document is not a replacement for the Medicare source materials that outline Medicare coverage requirements. Where there is a conflict between this document and Medicare source materials, the Medicare source materials will apply.

**REFERENCES**

**CMS National Coverage Determinations (NCDs)**

NCD 10.3 Inpatient Hospital Pain Rehabilitation Programs
Reference NCD: NCD 10.4 Outpatient Hospital Pain Rehabilitation Programs

**CMS Local Coverage Determinations (LCDs)**

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<td>L3622 (Pain Management) NGS</td>
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<td>L36920 ( Epidural Injections for Pain Management) Novitas</td>
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<td>L35033 (Pain Management) Novitas Retired 02/01/2017</td>
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<td>L35107 (Pain Management of Peripheral Nerves by Injection) Novitas Retired 12/01/2017</td>
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**CMS Articles**

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**CMS Benefit Policy Manual**

Chapter 1: § 110.2 Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility Medical Necessity Criteria

**CMS Claims Processing Manual**

Chapter 3; § 140.1.1 Criteria That Must Be Met By Inpatient Rehabilitation Facilities
GUIDELINE HISTORY/REVISION INFORMATION

Revisions to this summary document do not in any way modify the requirement that services be provided and documented in accordance with the Medicare guidelines in effect on the date of service in question.

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Action/Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>04/01/2019</td>
<td>• Reorganized policy template; relocated Terms and Conditions and Purpose section</td>
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<tr>
<td>01/09/2019</td>
<td>• Annual review</td>
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TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Medicare Advantage Policy Guidelines are applicable to UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage Plans offered by UnitedHealthcare and its affiliates.

These Policy Guidelines are provided for informational purposes, and do not constitute medical advice. Treating physicians and healthcare providers are solely responsible for determining what care to provide to their patients. Members should always consult their physician before making any decisions about medical care.

Benefit coverage for health services is determined by the member specific benefit plan document* and applicable laws that may require coverage for a specific service. The member specific benefit plan document identifies which services are covered, which are excluded, and which are subject to limitations. In the event of a conflict, the member specific benefit plan document supersedes the Medicare Advantage Policy Guidelines.

Medicare Advantage Policy Guidelines are developed as needed, are regularly reviewed and updated, and are subject to change. They represent a portion of the resources used to support UnitedHealthcare coverage decision making. UnitedHealthcare may modify these Policy Guidelines at any time by publishing a new version of the policy on this website. Medicare source materials used to develop these guidelines include, but are not limited to, CMS National Coverage Determinations (NCDs), Local Coverage Determinations (LCDs), Medicare Benefit Policy Manual, Medicare Claims Processing Manual, Medicare Program Integrity Manual, Medicare Managed Care Manual, etc. The information presented in the Medicare Advantage Policy Guidelines is believed to be accurate and current as of the date of publication, and is provided on an "AS IS" basis. Where there is a conflict between this document and Medicare source materials, the Medicare source materials will apply.

You are responsible for submission of accurate claims. Medicare Advantage Policy Guidelines are intended to ensure that coverage decisions are made accurately based on the code or codes that correctly describe the health care services provided. UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage Policy Guidelines use Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), or other coding guidelines. References to CPT® or other sources are for definitional purposes only and do not imply any right to reimbursement or guarantee claims payment.

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*For more information on a specific member's benefit coverage, please call the customer service number on the back of the member ID card or refer to the Administrative Guide.