

LA.CLI.047 Home Health



Medicaid Medical Coverage Policy

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Table of Contents

[Description](#)

[Coverage Limitations](#)

[References](#)

[Coverage Determination](#)

[Coding Information](#)

[Change Summary](#)

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Description

This policy applies to all Humana Healthy Horizons® in Louisiana (Plan) associates who administer, review, or communicate covered physical and behavioral health benefits and services to eligible enrolled members. The purpose of this policy is to define Home Health Services and the criteria for medical necessity for Humana Healthy Horizons® in Louisiana.

Home Health Services include but are not limited to the following:

- Skilled Nursing (Intermittent or part-time);
- Home Health Aide Services are provided in accordance with the plan of care (POC) as recommended by the attending physician;
- Extended Skilled Nursing Services (also referred to as Extended Home Health [EHH]), as part of Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) services, is extended nursing care by a registered nurse (RN) or a licensed practical nurse (LPN) and may be provided to members under age 21 who are considered medically fragile;
- Rehabilitation Services are physical, occupational and speech therapies, including audiology services;

- Medical Supplies, Equipment and Appliances as recommended by the physician, required in the POC for the member and suitable for use in any setting in which normal life activities take place are covered under the Durable Medical Equipment (DME) program when approved by the Prior Authorization Unit (PAU) managed care organization (MCO).

Services may be provided in the member's place of residence, which is defined as the place where normal life activities take place, but cannot include a hospital, intermediate care facility for individuals with intellectual disabilities or any setting in which payment is or could be made by Medicaid for inpatient services that include room and board. Medicaid beneficiaries do not have to be homebound to receive home health services.

Home health services are reimbursable only when ordered by an authorized healthcare provider (AHP) who certifies that the member meets the medical necessity criteria (Refer to section 23.3) to receive services a residential setting on an intermittent basis. An AHP includes a physician, nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, or physician assistant licensed, certified, registered, or otherwise authorized to order home healthcare services consistent with State law.

Coverage Determination

Humana Healthy Horizons in Louisiana members may be eligible under the Plan for **home health services** when the following considerations are met for the applicable service:

Medical necessity for home health services must be determined by medical documentation that supports the member's illness, injury and/or functional limitations. All home health services must be medically reasonable and appropriate. To be considered medically reasonable and appropriate, the care must be necessary to prevent further deterioration of a member's condition regardless of whether the illness/injury is acute, chronic, or terminal. The services must be reasonably determined to:

- Diagnose, cure, correct, or ameliorate defects, physical and mental illnesses, and diagnosed conditions of the effects of such conditions;
- Prevent the worsening of conditions, or the effects of conditions, that endanger life or cause pain; results in illness or infirmity; or have caused, or threatened to cause a physical or mental dysfunctional impairment, disability or development delay;
- Effectively reduce the level of direct medical supervision required or reduce the level of medical care or services received in an inpatient setting or provided by the home health program;
- Restore or improve physical or mental functionality, including developmental functioning, lost or delayed as the result of an illness, injury, or other diagnosed condition or the effects of the illness, injury, or condition; or
- Provide assistance in gaining access to needed medical, social, educational, and other services required to diagnose, treat, to support a diagnosed condition or the effects of the condition, in order that the

member might attain or retain independence, self-care, dignity, self-determination, personal safety and integration into family, community, facility environments and activities

Home health services are appropriate when a member's illness, injury, or disability causes significant medical hardship and will interfere with the effectiveness of the treatment if the member has to go to a physician's office, clinic, or other outpatient setting for the needed service. Any statement on the POC regarding this medical hardship must be supported by the totality of the member's medical records.

Plan of Care

The AHP must certify that the member meets the medical criteria to receive the service in the member's residential setting and needs the home health services on an intermittent basis. The AHP must order all home health services and sign a POC submitted by the home health agency (HHA). If the HHA is unable to obtain a signed POC for an initial request, an unsigned POC may be submitted for a 30-day period only. The signed POC must be submitted with the new prior authorization (PA) request for services to be approved. The AHP must reauthorize the POC every 60 days.

Face-to-Face Encounter Requirements

For the initiation of home health services, evidence of a face-to-face encounter with the AHP and the member must occur no sooner than 90 days prior to the start of home health services, or no later than 30 days after the start of home health services. If providers do not have this documentation prior to the initiation of services, then the initial PA request must be for 30 days only. Providers must submit documentation of the face-to-face encounter with the new PA request in order for services to be approved. The face-to-face encounter may be conducted by one of the following practitioners:

- The member's AHP;
- Nurse practitioner or clinical nurse specialist, working in collaboration with the member's AHP;
- Physician assistant under the supervision of the member's AHP;
- Certified nurse -midwife, as defined in section 1861(gg) of the Social Security Act; or
- Attending acute or post-acute physician for members admitted to home health immediately after an acute or post-acute stay

Prior Authorization Requirements

The HHA must submit a POC and PA request for:

- Adults ages 21 and older;
- Extended skilled nursing services (extended home health);
- Multiple daily nursing visits for individuals under age 21 who are not receiving extended skilled nursing services;
- Rehabilitation services (therapies)

PA approval must be received before services are provided.

Note: PA is not required for a single, daily nursing visit for beneficiaries under the age of 21 who are not receiving extended home health.

Skilled Nursing Services

Humana Healthy Horizons in Louisiana members may be eligible under the Plan for **skilled nursing services** by an RN or LPN that are necessary for the diagnosis and treatment of a member's illness or injury. The requested services must meet all the following:

- Be ordered and directed by a treating practitioner or specialist (MD, DO);
- Care must be delivered or supervised by a licensed professional to obtain a specific medical outcome;
- Services must be of skilled care in nature;
- Services must be part-time or intermittent;
- Services must be clinically appropriate and not more costly than an alternative health service

These services shall be consistent with the following:

- Established Medicaid policy;
- Nature and severity of the member's illness or injury;
- Particular medical needs of the patient;
- Accepted standards of medical and nursing practice

Examples of skilled nursing services include but are not limited to the following:

- Frequently monitoring blood pressure, fluid status, or blood glucose;
- More rigorous assessment of symptoms, including pain, dyspnea, or constipation;
- Management of complex wounds;
- Patient education around therapy (eg, home glucose monitoring and insulin administration);
- Assessment of medication adherence.

Home Health Aide Services Only

Humana Healthy Horizons in Louisiana members may be eligible under the Plan for **home health aide services** in situations when a dually eligible member (one who has coverage from both Medicare and Medicaid) requires only home health aide visits. Medicare will not pay for this service unless skilled services (skilled nursing service, physical therapy, occupational therapy or speech language therapy) are also required. However, Medicaid will reimburse for home health aide visits if only home health aide visits are required. Claims of this nature must either have a cover letter attached explaining the reasons for the lack of Medicare coverage or include this explanation in the remarks section of the claim.

Extended Skilled Nursing Services (Extended Home Health)

Humana Healthy Horizons in Louisiana members may be eligible under the Plan for **extended home health**, birth through age 20, when it is determined to be medically necessary for the member to receive a minimum of three hours per day of nursing services. Medical necessity for extended skilled nursing services

exists when the member has a medically complex condition characterized by multiple, significant medical problems that require nursing care in accordance with the Louisiana Nurse Practice Act (La. R.S. 37:911, et seq). When requesting PA for extended home health, all hours of care must be included with the PA request. In addition, the AHP's prescription and a copy of the POC must be attached to the appropriate PA form. Cases approved for extended home health should be billed using appropriate codes for a RN and LPN in conjunction with the total number of hours provided, indicating the units as hours.

Note: All extended skilled nursing services for members under the age of 21 require PA. Daily nursing visits that are less than three hours per day for members under the age of 21 who do not meet medical necessity criteria for extended home health do not require PA.

Prior Authorization Procedure of Extended Home Health Services at Hospital Discharge

In order to provide continuity of care for members, the following procedure will be used for members requiring extended home health care upon discharge from the hospital. Prior to hospital discharge, the PA process can begin. The following information must be sent to the Prior Authorization Unit:

- A letter of medical necessity from the AHP;
- A signed prescription indicating the number of hours of extended home health that are being requested;
- A copy of the admission assessment (history and physical);
- Progress notes;
- Discharge orders;
- A copy of the discharge summary, if available; and
- A copy of the unsigned POC. The unsigned POC will be accepted only if the member is being discharged from the hospital and is included with the above information. The POC assessment cannot be done in the hospital but must be done in the member's residential setting

Note: The HHA must forward the signed POC to the PAU as soon as the signed copy is received from the AHP.

The member must meet the medically necessary criteria for extended home health services in order for the PAU to approve the services. The extended home health request will be issued a PA number if the service has been approved. The HHA can check the e-PA system or call the PAU to check the status of the request and receive the PA number to start immediately approved services.

The member will be authorized for only six weeks of extended home health services. This is to ensure the signed POC is on file with the PAU. Prior to the end of the six week prior authorized period, all the requested information including the signed POC must be resubmitted to the PAU. The same information can be resubmitted unless there has been a change in the member's condition.

Rehabilitation Services

Physical, occupational and speech therapy services are covered when provided by the HHA. All home health rehabilitation services (physical, occupational and speech therapy) (except for initial evaluations and wheelchair seating evaluations, which are restricted to one evaluation per discipline per member every 180 days) require prior authorization from the MCO. All evaluations must have an AHP's prescription that must be kept in the member's file. All initial PA requests must include a copy of the AHP's referral and the results of the evaluation of the member that documents the need for therapy. All renewal PA requests must include a copy of the AHP's referral and progress notes that document the need for the continuation of therapy.

Physical Therapy

Humana Healthy Horizons in Louisiana members may be eligible under the Plan for **Physical Therapy Services** that are rehabilitative services necessary for the treatment of the member's illness or injury, or restoration and maintenance of function affected by the member's illness or injury. These services are provided with the expectation, based on the AHP's assessment of the member's rehabilitative potential, that:

- The member's condition will improve materially within a reasonable and generally predictable period of time; **OR**
- The services are necessary for the establishment of a safe and effective maintenance program

Occupational Therapy

Humana Healthy Horizons in Louisiana members may be eligible under the Plan for **Occupational therapy** when it is a medically prescribed treatment to improve or restore a function which has been impaired by illness, injury or, when the function has been permanently lost or reduced, to improve the member's ability to perform those tasks required for independent functioning.

Speech Therapy

Humana Healthy Horizons in Louisiana members may be eligible under the Plan for **Speech-Language Therapy Services** necessary for the diagnosis and treatment of speech and language disorders that result in communication disabilities and for the diagnosis and treatment of swallowing disorders (dysphagia), regardless of a communication disability.

Medical Supplies

Humana Healthy Horizons in Louisiana members may be eligible under the Plan for **Medical Supplies** recommended by the AHP, required in the care of the member and suitable for use in any setting in which normal life activities take place are covered under the DME program when approved by the MCO.

Coverage Limitations

Humana Healthy Horizons in Louisiana members may **NOT** be eligible under the Plan for **home health services** in a hospital, nursing home or intermediate care facility for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ICF-IID).^{*} See [exception](#)^{*}

***Exception:** In accordance with 42 CFR Part 483, Subpart I, there are situations in which a member residing in an ICF-IID may receive home health services. For example, short-term home health services may be provided to a member in an ICF-IID during an acute illness to avoid a member's transfer to a nursing facility.

Humana Healthy Horizons in Louisiana members may **NOT** be eligible under the Plan for **home health services** for any of the following indications:

- Convenience to the member or the member's family;
- Lack of personal transportation;
- Failure or lack of cooperation by the member or the member's legal guardians or caregivers to obtain the required medical services in an outpatient setting

Humana Healthy Horizons in Louisiana members age 21 and older may **NOT** be eligible for extended home health services or multiple daily nursing visits as there is no benefit coverage.

Service Limitations

Humana Healthy Horizons in Louisiana members may **NOT** be eligible under the Plan for multiple professional disciplines in a member's residential setting at the same time. This includes but is not limited to nurses, home health aides, and therapists. However, multiple professionals may provide services to multiple members in the same residential setting when it is medically necessary.

The Bureau of Health Services Financing (BHSF) will determine medical necessity for fee-for-service members. Medical necessity will be determined by a member's MCO if the member is enrolled in an MCO.

Service limits for home health services are as follows:

Birth through age 20:

- No annual service limits;
- Prior authorization (PA) is required for multiple visits on the same day when medically necessary;
- PA is required for all extended home health services

Ages 21 or older:

- Medicaid will reimburse only one visit per profession, per day;
- PA is required for all nursing and rehabilitation services in a residential setting;

- Skilled nursing and home health aide services;
- Physical therapy;
- Occupational therapy;
- Audiology services.

References

1. Louisiana Department of Health. Medicaid Services Manual. Chapter 23: Home Health. <https://ldh.la.gov/medicaid>. Published September 20, 2010. Updated May 28, 2025.

Change Summary

08/18/2022 Policy creation-Approved by LDH for Readiness

04/20/2023 UM Policy Committee-Added face-to-face encounter information.

09/07/2023 UM Policy Committee-Updated policy to reflect change made in Home Health Provider Manual.

09/11/2023 Changed to new template for Annual Review. MCD Clinical Delivery Experience

02/19/2024 LDH Approval date.

02/23/2024 Minor changes to template due to updated policy sent to LDH for approval. MCD Clinical Delivery Experience

06/03/2025 Annual Review, No Coverage Change.

07/01/2025 Update, Coverage Change to align with Provider Services Manual, Home Health Chapter