

**STATE OF MICHIGAN  
STATE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS AND RULES  
FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH**

P.O. Box 30763, Lansing, MI 48909  
(877) 833-0870; Fax: (517) 334-9505

IN THE MATTER OF:

██████████

Appellant

Docket No. 2011-7636 QHP  
Case No. 34319989

**DECISION AND ORDER**

This matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9 and 42 CFR 431.200 *et seq.*, upon the Appellant's request for a hearing.

After due notice, a hearing was held on ██████████. The Appellant was represented by ██████████.

██████████ was represented by ██████████. ██████████, appeared as a witness for ██████████. ██████████ is a Department of Community Health contracted Medicaid Health Plan (hereinafter MHP).

**ISSUE**

Did the Medicaid Health Plan properly deny the Appellant's request for occupational therapy?

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the competent, material and substantial evidence on the whole record, finds as material fact:

1. The Appellant is ██████████ Medicaid beneficiary who has been diagnosed with Autistic disorder. (Exhibit 1, page 3)
2. On ██████████, the MHP received a request for coverage for an occupational therapy evaluation and 12 therapy sessions for the Appellant with ██████████. (Exhibit 1, pages 3 and 7)
3. The MHP received medical documentation from the Appellant's physician, specifically progress notes from occupational therapy from ██████████. (Exhibit 1, pages 4-6)
4. On ██████████, the MHP sent the Appellant notice that the request for occupational therapy coverage was denied. The notice stated

that the submitted information showed the Appellant has a diagnosis of autism and pervasive developmental disorder and that the requested services are not covered. (Exhibit 1, pages 7-8)

5. On ██████████, the Department received the Appellant's Request for Hearing. (Exhibit 1, pages 1-2)

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

The Medical Assistance Program is established pursuant to Title XIX of the Social Security Act and is implemented by Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). It is administered in accordance with state statute, the Social Welfare Act, the Administrative Code, and the State Plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act Medical Assistance Program.

On May 30, 1997, the Michigan Department of Community Health (Department or MDCH) received approval from the Health Care Financing Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, allowing Michigan to restrict Medicaid beneficiaries' choice to obtain medical services only from specified Medicaid Health Plans.

The Respondent is one of those MHPs.

The covered services that the Contractor has available for enrollees must include, at a minimum, the covered services listed below (List omitted by Administrative Law Judge). The Contractor may limit services to those which are medically necessary and appropriate, and which conform to professionally accepted standards of care. The Contractor must operate consistent with all applicable Medicaid provider manuals and publications for coverages and limitations. If new services are added to the Michigan Medicaid Program, or if services are expanded, eliminated, or otherwise changed, the Contractor must implement the changes consistent with State direction in accordance with the provisions of Contract Section 2.024.

*Section 1.022(E)(1), Covered Services.  
MDCH contract (Contract) with the Medicaid Health Plans,  
October 1, 2009.*

(1) The major components of the Contractor's utilization management (UM) program must encompass, at a minimum, the following:

- (a) Written policies with review decision criteria and procedures that conform to managed health care industry standards and processes.
- (b) A formal utilization review committee directed by the Contractor's medical director to oversee the utilization review process.
- (c) Sufficient resources to regularly review the effectiveness of the utilization review process and to make changes to the process as needed.
- (d) An annual review and reporting of utilization review activities and outcomes/interventions from the review.
- (e) The UM activities of the Contractor must be integrated with the Contractor's QAPI program.

(2) Prior Approval Policy and Procedure

The Contractor must establish and use a written prior approval policy and procedure for UM purposes. The Contractor may not use such policies and procedures to avoid providing medically necessary services within the coverages established under the Contract. The policy must ensure that the review criteria for authorization decisions are applied consistently and require that the reviewer consult with the requesting provider when appropriate. The policy must also require that UM decisions be made by a health care professional who has appropriate clinical expertise regarding the service under review.

*Section 1.022(AA)(1) and (2),  
Utilization Management, Contract,  
October 1, 2009.*

As stated in the Department-MHP contract language above, a MHP, "must operate consistent with all applicable Medicaid Provider Manuals and publications for coverages and limitations." The pertinent sections of the Michigan Medicaid Provider Manual are as follows:

**SECTION 5 – STANDARDS OF COVERAGE AND SERVICE LIMITATIONS**

**5.1 OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY**

MDCH uses the terms Occupational Therapy, OT, and therapy interchangeably. OT is covered when furnished by a Medicaid-enrolled outpatient therapy provider when performed by:

- An occupational therapist currently registered in Michigan (OTR);
- A certified occupational therapy assistant (COTA) under the supervision of an OTR (i.e., the COTA's services must follow the evaluation and treatment plan developed by the OTR, and the OTR must supervise and monitor the COTA's performance with continuous assessment of the beneficiary's progress). All documentation must be reviewed and signed by the appropriate supervising OTR; or
- A student completing his clinical affiliation under the direct supervision of (i.e., in the presence of) an OTR. All documentation must be reviewed and signed by the appropriate supervising OTR.

OT is considered an all-inclusive charge and MDCH does not reimburse for a clinic room charge in addition to OT services unless it is unrelated. MDCH expects OTR's and COTA's to utilize the most ethically appropriate therapy within their scope of practice as defined by state law and/or the appropriate national professional association. OT must be medically necessary, reasonable and required to:

- Return the beneficiary to the functional level prior to illness or disability;
- Return the beneficiary to a functional level that is appropriate to a stable medical status; or
- Prevent a reduction in medical or functional status had the therapy not been provided.

**For CSHCS beneficiaries**

OT must be directly related to the CSHCS-eligible diagnosis(es) and prescribed by the specialty physician who is overseeing care.

**For beneficiaries 21 years of age and older**

OT is only covered if it can be reasonably expected to result in a meaningful improvement in the beneficiary's ability to perform functional day-to-day activities that are significant in the beneficiary's life roles despite impairments, activity limitations or participation restrictions.

MDCH anticipates OT will result in a functional improvement that is significant to the beneficiary's ability to perform appropriate daily living tasks (per beneficiary's chronological, developmental, or functional status). Functional improvements must be achieved in a reasonable amount of time and must be maintainable. MDCH does not cover

therapy that does not have an impact on the beneficiary's ability to perform age-appropriate tasks.

OT must be skilled (i.e., require the skills, knowledge and education of an OTR). MDCH does not cover interventions provided by another practitioner (e.g., teacher, registered nurse [RN], licensed physical therapist [LPT], family member, or caregiver).

MDCH anticipates OT will result in a functional improvement that is significant to the beneficiary's ability to perform appropriate daily living tasks (per beneficiary's chronological, developmental, or functional status). Functional improvements must be achieved in a reasonable amount of time and must be maintainable. MDCH does not cover therapy that does not have an impact on the beneficiary's ability to perform age-appropriate tasks.

OT must be skilled (i.e., require the skills, knowledge and education of an OTR). MDCH does not cover interventions provided by another practitioner (e.g., teacher, registered nurse [RN], licensed physical therapist [LPT], family member, or caregiver).

**OT may be covered for one or more of the following:**

- Therapeutic use of occupations\*.
- Adaptation of environments and processes to enhance functional performance in occupations\*.
- Graded tasks (performance components) in activities as prerequisites to an engagement in occupations\*.
- Design, fabrication, application, or training in the use of assistive technology or orthotic devices.
- Skilled services that are designed to set up, train, monitor, and modify a maintenance or prevention program to be carried out by family or caregivers. Routine provision of the maintenance/prevention program is not a covered OT service.

\* Occupations are goal-directed activities that extend over time (i.e., performed repeatedly), are meaningful to the performer, and involve multiple steps or tasks. For example, doing dishes is a repeated task. Buying dishes happens once; therefore, does not extend over time and is not a repeated task.

**OT is not covered for the following:**

- When provided by an independent OTR\*\*.

- For educational, vocational, or recreational purposes.
- If services are required to be provided by another public agency (e.g., community mental health services provider, school-based services).
- If therapy requires PA and service is rendered before PA is approved.
- If therapy is habilitative. Habilitative treatment includes teaching someone how to perform a task (i.e., daily living skill) for the first time without compensatory techniques or processes. This may include teaching a child normal dressing techniques or cooking skills to an adult who has not performed meal preparation tasks in the past.
- If therapy is designed to facilitate the normal progression of development without compensatory techniques or processes.
- For development of perceptual motor skills and sensory integrative functions to follow a normal sequence. If the beneficiary exhibits severe pathology in the perception of, or response to, sensory input to the extent that it significantly limits the ability to function, OT may be covered.
- Continuation of therapy that is maintenance in nature.

\*\* An independent OTR may enroll in Medicaid if he provides Medicare-covered therapy and intends to bill Medicaid for Medicare coinsurance and/or deductible only.

*Department of Community Health,  
Medicaid Provider Manual, Outpatient Therapy Section  
Version Date: October 1, 2010, Pages 7-8*

### **5.1.A. DUPLICATION OF SERVICES**

Some therapy areas (e.g., dysphagia, assistive technology, hand therapy) may be appropriately addressed by more than one discipline (e.g., OT, PT, speech therapy) in more than one setting. MDCH does not cover duplication of service (i.e., where two disciplines are working on similar goals/areas). The OTR is responsible to communicate with other therapists and coordinate services. MDCH requires any related documentation to include coordination of services.

### 5.1.B. SERVICES TO SCHOOL-AGED BENEFICIARIES

School-aged beneficiaries may be eligible to receive OT through multiple sources. MDCH expects educational OT to be provided by the school system, and it is not covered by MDCH or CSHCS. (Example: OT coordination for handwriting, increasing attention span, identifying colors and numbers.)

MDCH only covers medically necessary OT when provided in the outpatient setting. Coordination between all OT providers must be continuous to ensure a smooth transition between sources.

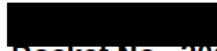
Outpatient therapy provided to school-aged children during the summer months in order to maintain the therapy services provided in the school is considered a continuation of therapy services when there is no change in beneficiary diagnosis or function. Prior authorization is required before initiating a continuation of therapy.

*Department of Community Health,  
Medicaid Provider Manual, Outpatient Therapy Section  
Version Date: October 1, 2010, Pages 8-9*

The ██████████ explained that for the MHP to cover occupational therapy, the services must be needed to return to a functional level prior to an illness or injury. The submitted progress notes do not indicate that the requested occupational therapy services were needed due to an illness or injury. She further explained that the school system is providing occupational therapy services, and there are appeal rights with them if increased occupational therapy services are needed.

The Appellant's ██████████ disagrees with the denial and explained that while the Appellant is receiving occupational therapy services through the school, there is not much one on one. The Appellant's ██████████ further stated that she can not provide the tools the Appellant needs herself.

While this ALJ sympathizes with the Appellant's circumstances, Medicaid policy clearly states that occupational therapy that is habilitative, developmental, or required to be provided by another public agency is not covered. Based upon available evidence, the requested occupational therapy services are habilitative, designed to facilitate the development, and the school district is providing occupational therapy services to the Appellant during the school year. Accordingly, the MHP denial was consistent with the Department's Medicaid policy and must be upheld. If there is a break in the school based occupational therapy services over the summer months, the Appellant may wish to submit a new request to the MHP at that time for coverage during the summer months.

  
Docket No. 2011-7636 QHP  
Decision & Order

**DECISION AND ORDER**

The Administrative Law Judge, based on the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that that the Medicaid Health Plan properly denied the Appellant's request for occupational therapy.

**IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED** that:

The Medicaid Health Plan's decision is AFFIRMED.

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Colleen Lack  
Administrative Law Judge  
for Olga Dazzo, Director  
Michigan Department of Community Health

cc: 

Date Mailed: 2/17/2011

**\*\*\* NOTICE \*\*\***

The State Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules may order a rehearing on either its own motion or at the request of a party within 30 days of the mailing date of this Decision and Order. The State Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules will not order a rehearing on the Department's motion where the final decision or rehearing cannot be implemented within 90 days of the filing of the original request. The Appellant may appeal the Decision and Order to Circuit Court within 30 days of the receipt of the Decision and Order or, if a timely request for rehearing was made, within 30 days of the receipt of the rehearing decision.