

**STATE OF MICHIGAN  
MICHIGAN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING SYSTEM  
FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH**  
P.O. Box 30763, Lansing, MI 48909  
(877) 833-0870; Fax: (517) 373-4147

IN THE MATTER OF:

██████████

Appellant

\_\_\_\_\_ /

Docket No. 14-014206 PA  
Case No. ██████████

**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 Appellant's request for hearing.

After due notice, a hearing was held on ██████████. The following individuals appeared as witnesses on behalf of Appellant: ██████████, Social Worker, ██████████, RN, both are staff of the nursing home where Appellant resides. Appellant's parents: ██████████ and ██████████.

██████████, Appeals Review Officer, represented the Department. ██████████, Medicaid Utilization Analyst, appeared as a witness for the Department.

**ISSUE**

Did the Department properly deny the Appellant's prior authorization request for a Pride quantum 1450 HD power wheelchair and accessories?

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

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

1. Appellant is a ██████ year old female Medicaid beneficiary, who has a primary diagnosis of 340-multiple sclerosis, and a secondary diagnosis of 278.01-morbid obesity. Appellant resides in a nursing facility.
2. On ██████████, Appellant filed a Complex Seating and Mobility Device Prior Approval Authorization (PA) Request, for a power wheelchair with accessories. (Exhibit a.7-16).
3. On ██████████ the Department issued a Notification of Denial denying Appellant's request on the grounds that the beneficiary does not meet the standards of coverage for a power wheelchair for reasons including that

the requested chair is not medically necessary, that the nursing plan of care for the requested equipment was not submitted as required by policy, that Appellant is able to propel a manual wheelchair, and that applicable requirements found in the Medicaid Provider Manual (MPM) Medical Supplier Chapter sections: 1, 1.5, 1.8, 1.10, 2.48, and in the Durable Medical Equipment chapter 10.8 were not met. (Exhibit A; A.5-6; Testimony).

4. On ██████████, the Michigan Administrative Hearing System received the hearing request filed on the Appellant's behalf. (Exhibit A.4).

### **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.

The Medicaid Provider Manual provides, in pertinent part, as follows:

#### **SECTION 1 – PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

This chapter applies to Medical Suppliers/Durable Medical Equipment and Orthotists/Prosthetists.

Providers of Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics and Supplies (DMEPOS) must be enrolled as a Medicare provider effective September 30, 2009. (Refer to the General Information for Providers chapter for additional information.)

The primary objective of the Medicaid Program is to ensure that medically necessary services are made available to those who would not otherwise have the financial resources to purchase them.

The primary objective of the Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) Program is to ensure that CSHCS beneficiaries receive medically necessary services that relate to the CSHCS qualifying diagnosis.

This chapter describes policy coverage for the Medicaid Fee-for-Service (FFS) population and the CSHCS population. Throughout the chapter, use of the terms Medicaid and MDCH

includes both the Medicaid and CSHCS Programs unless otherwise noted.

Medicaid covers the least costly alternative that meets the beneficiary's medical need for medical supplies, durable medical equipment or orthotics/prosthetics.

\* \* \*

### **Durable Medical Equipment (DME)**

DME are those items that are Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved, can stand repeated use, are primarily and customarily used to serve a medical purpose, are not useful to a person in the absence of illness or injury, and can be used in the beneficiary's home. Examples are: hospital beds, wheelchairs, and ventilators. DME is a benefit for beneficiaries when:

- It is medically and functionally necessary to meet the needs of the beneficiary.
- It may prevent frequent hospitalization or institutionalization.
- It is life sustaining.

\* \* \*

### **1.3 PLACE OF SERVICE**

Medicaid covers medical supplies, durable medical equipment (DME), orthotics, and prosthetics for use in the beneficiary's place of residence except for skilled nursing or nursing facilities.

\* \* \*

### **1.5 MEDICAL NECESSITY**

Medical devices are covered if they are the most cost-effective treatment available and meet the Standards of Coverage stated in the Coverage Conditions and Requirements Section of this chapter.

The medical record must contain sufficient documentation of the beneficiary's medical condition to substantiate the necessity for the type and quantity of items ordered and for the

frequency of use or replacement. The information should include the beneficiary's diagnosis, medical condition, and other pertinent information including, but not limited to, duration of the condition, clinical course, prognosis, nature and extent of functional limitations, other therapeutic interventions and results, and past experience with related items. Neither a physician, nurse practitioner (NP) or physician assistant (PA) order nor a certificate of medical necessity by itself provides sufficient documentation of medical necessity, even though it is signed by the treating/ordering physician, NP or PA. Information in the medical record must support the item's medical necessity and substantiate that the medical device needed is the most appropriate economic alternative that meets MDCH standards of coverage.

Medical equipment may be determined to be medically necessary when all of the following apply:

- The service/device meets applicable federal and state laws, rules, regulations, and MDCH promulgated policies.
- It is medically appropriate and necessary to treat a specific medical diagnosis, medical condition, or functional need, and is an integral part of the nursing facility daily plan of care or is required for the community residential setting.
- The function of the service/device:
  - meets accepted medical standards;
  - practices guidelines related to type, frequency, and duration of treatment; and
  - is within scope of current medical practice.
- It is inappropriate to use a nonmedical item.
- It is the most cost effective treatment available.
- The service/device is ordered by the treating physician, and clinical documentation from the medical record supports the medical necessity for the request (as described above) and substantiates the physician's order.
- The service/device meets the standards of coverage published by MDCH.
- It meets the definition of Durable Medical Equipment (DME), as defined in the Program Overview section of this chapter.
- Its use meets FDA and manufacturer indications.

\* \* \* \*

### **1.10 NONCOVERED ITEMS**

Items that are not covered by Medicaid include, but are not limited to:

Custom seating for secondary and/or transport chairs\* \* \* \*

- Power tilt-in-space or reclining wheelchairs for a long-term
- Items used solely for the purpose of restraining the beneficiary for behavioral or other reasons care resident because there is limited staffing.

\* \* \* \*

### **2.48 WHEELCHAIRS, PEDIATRIC MOBILITY AND POSITIONING MEDICAL DEVICES, AND SEATING SYSTEMS**

\* \* \* \*

#### **POWER WHEELCHAIR OR POWER-OPERATED VEHICLE (POV) IN BOTH COMMUNITY RESIDENTIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS**

May be covered if the beneficiary meets all of the following:

- Lacks the ability to propel a manual wheelchair, or has a medical condition that would be compromised by propelling a manual wheelchair, for at least 60 feet over hard, smooth, or carpeted surfaces with or without rest intervals.
- ...
- Is able to safely operate, control and maneuver the wheelchair in their environmental setting, including through doorways and over thresholds up to 1 1/2", as appropriate.
- Has cognitive, functional level that permits safe operation of a power mobility device with or without training....

## **2.48.B. STANDARDS OF COVERAGE**

### **Manual Wheelchair in Institutional Residential Setting**

**Coverage and reimbursement for all standard manual wheelchairs for an institutional residential setting is included in the per diem rate. ...**

### **Custom-Fabricated Seating Systems**

May be covered when required to assure safe mobility and functional positioning when the beneficiary has postural deformities, contractions, tonal abnormalities, functional impairments, muscle weakness, pressure points, and seating balance difficulties. May be covered if all of the following are met:

- Two or more of the above clinical indications are documented in the medical record and in the mobility assessment, and the severity of the clinical indications cannot be accommodated by a standard seating system.
- Must accommodate growth and adjustments a minimum of 3" in depth and 2" in width.
- Must document the reason for the selection when the system cannot be used in more than one mobility device.
- Is the most economical alternative available to meet the beneficiary's mobility needs.

For CSHCS pediatric beneficiaries, a written order from an appropriate board-certified pediatric subspecialist or an Office of Medical Affairs (OMA)-approved physician is required. MDCH also reserves the right to require a written order from an appropriate board-certified pediatric subspecialist for Medicaid beneficiaries.

### **Manual Tilt-in-Space or Recline Function in Community Residential Setting**

**Manual tilt-in-space** function allows the seat and back of the wheelchair to move as a unit, such that the angle of the back to the floor changes from approximately 90 degrees to 45 degrees or less. This change in position does not affect the hip-to-knee angle. The seat may be tilted manually. The **tilt-in-space** function for a wheelchair may be covered if **one or more** of the following apply:

- History of skin breakdown or current indication of imminent skin breakdown that cannot be controlled (or has not in the past) by less costly modalities (such as pressure relief cushions or manual pressure relief techniques).
- Excessive extensor or flexor muscle tone that is exacerbated by change in hip angle and makes positioning in any upright chair ineffective. State reason why changing angles of position is medically necessary.
- Very low muscle tone that cannot maintain upright positioning against gravity, causing spinal anomalies.
- Beneficiary has knee contractures and a custom-molded seating system.

Coverage of both a **manual tilt-in-space and recline function** for a wheelchair requires medical need (such as high probability of the development of hip contractures) if only a tilt-in-space without recline is used. Also, there is a medical contraindication to using recline-only without the tilt-in-space function.

### **Power Tilt-in-Space or Recline Function in Both Community Residential and Institutional Residential Settings**

**Power tilt-in-space or recline** function may be covered if **all** of the following exist:

- An existing medical condition results in the inability to reposition self without the use of a power tilt or recline mechanism.
- The frequency of repositioning is clinically indicated and is an integral part of the nursing facility plan of care.
- Beneficiary requires assistance to use a manual tilt-in-space or recline system, and there are regular periods of time that the beneficiary is without assistance.
- Beneficiary requires assistance to use a manual tilt-in-space or recline system, and is able to independently care for himself when provided a power tilt-in-space or recline modification.

For CSHCS pediatric beneficiaries, a written order from an appropriate board-certified pediatric subspecialist or an Office of Medical Affairs (OMA)-approved physician is required. MDCH also reserves the right to require a written order from an appropriate board-certified pediatric subspecialist for Medicaid beneficiaries.

**2.48.C. PRIOR AUTHORIZATION FOR PURCHASE,  
RENTALS, REPAIRS, AND/OR REPLACEMENT  
OF MOBILITY DEVICES**

\* \* \* \*

**Prior Authorization Process for Beneficiaries in the  
Institutional Residential Setting**

Prior authorization is required for Medicaid coverage and separate reimbursement for medically necessary power-operated vehicles and power or manual wheelchairs with custom-fabricated seating systems. The request for a resident assessment must be initiated by the treating physician with the stated medical reason for the referral.

Facility clinicians who are responsible for the overall nursing plan of care and treatment of the resident will prepare and submit prior authorization requests and medical documentation directly to the MDCH Program Review Division.

Refer to the Nursing Facility Coverages chapter for additional information regarding prior authorization of wheelchairs and custom-fabricated seating systems for beneficiaries in an institutional residential setting.

(Refer to the Prior Authorization Form subsection and the Evaluation and Medical Justification for Complex Seating Systems and Mobility Devices Form subsection of this chapter for additional information.)

MDCH Medicaid Provider Manual  
Medical Supplier Section  
April 1, 2014  
Emphasis added.

**10.8 DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT**

### **10.8.A. STANDARD EQUIPMENT**

Standard durable medical equipment is included in the facility's per diem rate. ...Standard durable medical equipment includes, not is not limited to:...

...\* Wheelchairs for transport in or out of the facility.

\* \* \* \*

### **10.8.B. Custom-Fabricated Seating and/or Power Wheelchairs**

Custom-fabricated seating and/or power wheelchairs for nursing facility residents may be covered when the established standards of coverage are met and severity and intensity of the disease process requires custom-fabricated seating or a power-operated wheelchair as medically necessary and is an integral part of the facility's daily nursing plan of care.

\* \* \* \*

#### **10.8.B.1. MEDICAL NECESSITY**

A physician's order by itself is not sufficient documentation of medical necessity, even when it is signed by the treating physician. Clinical documentation from the medical record must support the medical necessity for the request and substantiate the physician's order. In addition, Medicaid coverage is not based solely on a physician's order; the request must also meet the standards of coverage published by MDCH. (Refer to the Medical Necessity subsection of the Medical Supplier chapter for a complete description of medical necessity requirements.)

The nursing facility's responsibility for each resident's health care needs and other services, including patient care, transfers, safety, skin care, equipment, medical supplies, etc., are described in federal regulations and state licensure requirements. The use of medical equipment as a substitute for responsible patient care is inappropriate and not covered.

Refer to the Medical Supplier chapter for additional information regarding Medicaid definitions and standards of coverage for mobility and custom-fabricated seating systems.

#### **10.8.B.2. NONCOVERED**

**Docket No. 14-014206 PA**  
**Decision and Order**

Power wheelchairs and custom-fabricated seating systems, including add-on components, are not covered outside the facility per diem rate when:

- There is an appropriate economic alternative.
- The devices are not related to, or an integral part of, the nursing facility daily plan of care.
- The accessory or add-on component is deemed to be standard under the definition of a standard manual wheelchair.
- The wheelchair is used as a restraint or for the purpose of treating aberrant behaviors.
- The need for the wheelchair is a substitute for appropriate clinical nursing services, as defined in federal regulations.
- The wheelchair is inappropriate for the beneficiary's cognitive level or behavioral level.
- The beneficiary is unable to safely operate the wheelchair.
- A standard wheelchair meets functional need or outcome as defined in the plan of care.
- The device is ordered for nonstandard use (e.g., therapeutic modality or exercise). ...

MDCH Medicaid Provider Manual  
Nursing Facility Coverages  
April 1, 2014  
Emphasis added

In the present case, the Department determined that the PA request should be denied for a number of alternative reasons. The Department's position is that any one denial would be sufficient for this ALJ to uphold the denial.

First the Department argued that based on the evidence, Appellant could not operate a powered wheel chair successfully as the prior powered wheel chair she used was taken away from her. In conjunction with this argument, the Department argued that Appellant did not have the cognitive ability to operate an powered wheelchair. However, Appellants' witnesses credibly testified that the reason the chair was 'taken away' was

**Docket No. 14-014206 PA**  
**Decision and Order**

that it was not operating correctly, and was thus unsafe. In addition, Appellant had put on weight, and thus, the chair was a poor fit.

Next the Department argued that there is an economic alternative-a manual wheelchair; that based on the documentation Appellant can propel herself.

The Department also argued that the nursing plan of care was not delivered as required by the MPM policy.

The Medicaid Utilization Analyst explained that she had to base her decision on the information that she had at the time.

As noted above, the Department gave a number of alternative reasons for the denial. The purview of an administrative law judge (ALJ) is to review the Department's action and to make a determination if those actions are in compliance with Department policy, and not contrary to law. The ALJ must base the hearing decision on the preponderance of the evidence offered at the hearing or otherwise included in the record. Thus, credible and substantial evidence to support any one denial will require this ALJ to uphold the Department.

After a careful review of the credible and substantial evidence on the whole records, this ALJ finds that the Department's actions were in compliance with its policy, and supported by the documentary and testimonial evidence taken as a whole. As the preponderance of evidence weighs on favor of the Department based on the available evidence, this ALJ must uphold the Department.

Based on the documentation submitted, Appellant did not meet the Medicaid standards of coverage and documentation requirements to establish medical necessity for the requested wheel chair and accessories. Appellant did not submit a nursing facility daily plan of care as required in Section 10.8.B.2.

Accordingly the denial must be upheld.

**DECISION AND ORDER**

The Administrative Law Judge, based on the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the Department properly denied the Appellant's request for a Power Wheelchair and accessories based on the submitted documentation.

**IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED** that:

The Department's decision is **AFFIRMED**.

  s/    
Janice Spodarek  
Administrative Law Judge  
for Nick Lyon, Director  
Michigan Department of Community Health

JS [REDACTED]

cc: [REDACTED]

Date Signed: [REDACTED]

Date Mailed: [REDACTED]

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

The Michigan Administrative Hearing System 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 Michigan Administrative Hearing System 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.