



Qualified Health Plans offered in North Carolina by CareSource North Carolina Co., d/b/a CareSource

<b>ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY STATEMENT</b>	
<b>North Carolina Marketplace</b>	
Policy Name & Number	Date Effective
Medical Necessity Determinations-NC MP-AD-1292	10/01/2024
Policy Type	
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE</b>	

Administrative Policy Statement prepared by CareSource and its affiliates are derived from literature based on and supported by clinical guidelines, nationally recognized utilization and technology assessment guidelines, other medical management industry standards, and published MCO clinical policy guidelines. Medically necessary services include, but are not limited to, those health care services or supplies that are proper and necessary for the diagnosis or treatment of disease, illness, or injury and without which the patient can be expected to suffer prolonged, increased or new morbidity, impairment of function, dysfunction of a body organ or part, or significant pain and discomfort. These services meet the standards of good medical practice in the local area, are the lowest cost alternative, and are not provided mainly for the convenience of the member or provider. Medically necessary services also include those services defined in any Evidence of Coverage documents, Medical Policy Statements, Provider Manuals, Member Handbooks, and/or other policies and procedures.

Administrative Policy Statements prepared by CareSource and its affiliates do not ensure an authorization or payment of services. Please refer to the plan contract (often referred to as the Evidence of Coverage) for the service(s) referenced in the Administrative Policy Statement. If there is a conflict between the Administrative Policy Statement and the plan contract (i.e., Evidence of Coverage), then the plan contract (i.e., Evidence of Coverage) will be the controlling document used to make the determination.

According to the rules of Mental Health Parity Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA), coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of a behavioral health disorder will not be subject to any limitations that are less favorable than the limitations that apply to medical conditions as covered under this policy.

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## A. Subject

### **Medical Necessity Determinations**

## B. Background

The term medical necessity has been used by health plans and providers to define benefit coverage. Medical necessity definitions vary among entities, including the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS), the American Medical Association (AMA), state regulatory bodies, and most healthcare insurance providers, but definitions most often incorporate the idea that healthcare services must be “reasonable and necessary” or “appropriate,” given a patient’s condition and the current standards of clinical practice.

Payors and insurance plans may limit coverage for services that are reasonable and necessary if the service is provided more frequently than allowed under a national coverage policy, a local medical policy, or a clinically accepted standard of practice.

International Classification of Diseases (ICD) guidelines instruct the clinician to choose a diagnosis code that accurately describes a clinical condition or reason for a visit and support medical necessity for services reported. To better support medical necessity for services reported, providers should apply universally accepted healthcare principles that are documented in the patient’s medical record, including diagnoses, coding with the highest level of specificity, specific descriptions of the patient’s condition, illness, or disease and identification of emergent, acute and chronic conditions.

CareSource will determine medical necessity for a requested service, procedure, or product based on the hierarchy within this policy.

## C. Definitions

- **MCG Health** – Developed care guidelines directing informed care in strict accordance with the principles of evidence-based medicine and best practices.
- **Mental Health Parity and Addictions Equity Act (MHPAEA)** – A 2008 federal law that generally prevents group health plans and health insurance issuers that provide mental health and substance use disorder (MH/SUD) benefits from imposing less favorable benefit limitations on those benefits than on medical/surgical coverage.

## D. Policy

- I. According to the rules of the Mental Health Parity Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA), coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of a behavioral health disorder will not be subject to any limitations that are less favorable than the limitations that apply to medical conditions as covered under this policy.
- II. Medical necessity includes the following: Covered services or supplies that are:
  - A. Provided for the diagnosis, treatment, cure, or relief of a health condition, illness, injury, or disease, and, except as allowed under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 58-3-255, not for experimental, investigational, or cosmetic purposes.

The ADMINISTRATIVE Policy Statement detailed above has received due consideration as defined in the ADMINISTRATIVE Policy Statement Policy and is approved.

- B. Necessary for and appropriate to the diagnosis, treatment, cure, or relief of a health condition, illness, injury, disease, or its symptoms.
  - C. Within generally accepted standards of medical care in the community.
  - D. Not solely for the convenience of the Insured, the Insured's family, or the Provider.
- III. The reviewer will determine medical necessity based on the following hierarchy:
- A. Benefit contract language.
  - B. Federal regulation or state regulation, including state waiver regulations when applicable.
  - C. CareSource medical policy statements.
  - D. Nationally accepted evidence-based clinical guidelines, such as MCG Health, Interqual, or the American Society of Addiction Medicine.
  - E. Professional judgment of the medical or behavioral health reviewer based on the following potential resources, which may include but are not limited to the following:
    - 1. Clinical practice guidelines published by consortiums of medical organizations and generally accepted as industry standard.
    - 2. Evidence from 2 published studies from major scientific or medical peer-reviewed journals that are less than 5 years old (preferred) and less than 10 years (required) to support the proposed use for the specific medical condition as safe and effective.
    - 3. National panels and consortiums such as NIH (National Institutes of Health), CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), AHRQ (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality), NCCN (National Comprehensive Cancer Network), SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration). Studies must be approved by a United States institutional review board (IRB) accredited by the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs, Inc. (AAHRPP) to protect vulnerable minors.
    - 4. Commercial external organizations, such as Up-to-Date and Hayes, Inc.
    - 5. Consultation from a like-specialty peer.
    - 6. National specialty and sub-specialty societies such as the American Psychiatric Association and the American Board of Internal Medicine.
- E. Conditions of Coverage
- The following does not guarantee coverage or claims payment for a procedure or treatment under a plan (not an all-inclusive list):
- I. A physician has performed or prescribed a procedure or treatment.
  - II. The procedure or treatment may be the only available treatment for an injury, sickness, or behavioral health disorder.
  - III. The physician has determined that a particular health care service is medically necessary or medically appropriate.
- F. Related Policies/Rules
- CareSource Evidence of Coverage

The ADMINISTRATIVE Policy Statement detailed above has received due consideration as defined in the ADMINISTRATIVE Policy Statement Policy and is approved.

**G. Review/Revision History**

DATE		ACTION
<b>Date Issued</b>	10/12/2022	
<b>Date Revised</b>	02/01/2023 06/21/2023 07/03/2024	Medical necessity definition from statute added under a new section. Annual review. Updated specialty chart. Approved at Committee. Annual review: Removed specialty chart. Approved at Committee.
<b>Date Effective</b>	10/01/2024	
<b>Date Archived</b>		

**H. References**

1. American Medical Association. Definition of medical necessity. Accessed June 8, 2024. [www.ama.com](http://www.ama.com)
2. *2024 Evidence of Coverage: North Carolina*. CareSource; 2024. Accessed June 8, 2024.
3. Miscellaneous Insurance and Managed Care Coverage and Network Provisions, N.C. GEN. STAT. § 58-3-200 (2023).
4. Coverage of Clinical Trials, N.C. GEN. STAT. § 58-3-255 (2023).

The ADMINISTRATIVE Policy Statement detailed above has received due consideration as defined in the ADMINISTRATIVE Policy Statement Policy and is approved.