

Clinical Policy: Palliative Care

Reference Number: IL.CP.MP.553

Last Review Date: 06/25/21

[Coding Implications](#)

[Revision Log](#)

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Description

Palliative care is a multidisciplinary approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families or caregivers (if applicable) facing the problem(s) associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification, thorough assessment, treatment of pain and other problems and a focus on physical, psychosocial and spiritual care. The following features characterize palliative care philosophy and delivery:

- * Care is provided and services are coordinated by an interdisciplinary team;
- * Patients, families, palliative and non-palliative health care providers collaborate and communicate about care needs;
- * Services are available concurrently with or independent of curative or life-prolonging care;
- * Patient and family hopes for peace and dignity are supported throughout the course of illness, during the dying process, and after death

Policy/Criteria

- I. It is the policy of health plans affiliated with Centene Corporation® that palliative care is **medically necessary** for the indications listed in the table format below. Note that this is not intended to be an all-inclusive list. (Please note that referrals can be made via Meridian's own internal process of HRA/Care Coordination/Intensive Case Management/Meridian Pathways team as well as from our credentialed primary care physicians/oncologists/pain specialists for consideration and procedural review/authorization).

Debility/Failure to Thrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greater than three chronic conditions in patient over 75 years old• Functional decline• Weight loss• Patient/family desire for low-yield therapy• Increasing frequency of outpatient visits, emergency department visits, hospitalizations
Cancer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uncontrolled symptoms due to cancer or treatment• Introduced at time of diagnosis – if disease likely incurable

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduced when disease progresses despite therapy
Heart Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage III or IV heart failure despite optimal medical management Angina refractory to medical or interventional management Frequent emergency department visits or hospital admissions Frequent discharges from implanted defibrillators despite optimal device and antiarrhythmic management
Pulmonary Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxygen-dependent, O2 sats less than 88% on room air Unintentional weight loss Dyspnea with minimal to moderate exertion Other pulmonary diagnoses, e.g., pulmonary fibrosis, pulmonary hypertension
Dementia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refractory behavioral problems Feeding problems – weight loss Caregiver stress – support needed Frequency of emergency department visits Increased safety concerns
Liver Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased need for paracentesis for removal of ascitic fluid Increased confusion (hepatic encephalopathy) Symptomatic disease
Renal Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dialysis Stage IV or Stage V kidney disease
Neurologic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stroke Parkinson's ALS – amyotrophic lateral sclerosis MS – multiple sclerosis

Criteria for Coverage:

A. Meridian Health Plan covers palliative care, including the following services:

1. Palliative care consultation and plan of care creation
2. Potentially curative treatments

3. Palliative care in the home: Routine intermittent skilled services are covered in the member's home for the member and his/her family

4. Palliative care in a basic nursing home or residential facility: Routine intermittent skilled services are covered.

5. Inpatient care: Short-term inpatient care is covered when necessary for skilled nursing needs that cannot be provided in other settings. Inpatient care provided either in an acute care facility, or skilled nursing facility is subject to the “Skilled Nursing/Rehabilitation/Inpatient Hospice” benefit maximum days. Prior authorization is required.

B. The following services are not skilled nursing care services and are not indicated for palliative care, but they may be included in the per diem agreement with the palliative care organization/provider.

1. Homemaker or caretaker services, and any services or supplies not solely related to the care of the member, including, but not limited to, sitter or companion services for the member who is ill or other members of the family, transportation, housecleaning, and maintenance of the house

2. Respite care

3. Home health aide or custodial care without a skilled need

C. Non-covered services:

1. Experimental and investigational care or services

Coding Implications

This clinical policy references Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®). CPT® is a registered trademark of the American Medical Association. All CPT codes and descriptions are copyrighted 2019, American Medical Association. All rights reserved. CPT codes and CPT descriptions are from the current manuals and those included herein are not intended to be all-inclusive and are included for informational purposes only. Codes referenced in this clinical policy are for informational purposes only. Inclusion or exclusion of any codes does not guarantee coverage. Providers should reference the most up-to-date sources of professional coding guidance prior to the submission of claims for reimbursement of covered services.

CPT® Codes	Description

CLINICAL POLICY
Palliative Care



HCPCS ^{®*} Codes	Description

ICD-10-CM Diagnosis Codes that Support Coverage Criteria

+ Indicates a code(s) requiring an additional character

ICD-10-CM Code	Description

Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals	Date	Approval Date
Original approval date		

References

1. WHO. “WHO Definition of Palliative Care”.
<http://www.who.int/cancer/palliative/definition/en/>
2. National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. “An Explanation of Palliative Care”.
<http://www.nhpco.org/>
3. Michigan Medicaid Provider Manual. “Hospice”. Version Date: October 1, 2019
4. Illinois Medical Provider Handbook. Chapter 200. “Hospice Agencies”. Version Date 2019.

Important Reminder

This clinical policy has been developed by appropriately experienced and licensed health care professionals based on a review and consideration of currently available generally accepted standards of medical practice; peer-reviewed medical literature; government agency/program approval status; evidence-based guidelines and positions of leading national health professional organizations; views of physicians practicing in relevant clinical areas affected by this clinical policy; and other available clinical information. The Health Plan makes no representations and accepts no liability with respect to the content of any external information used or relied upon in developing this clinical policy. This clinical policy is consistent with standards of medical practice current at the time that this clinical policy was approved. “Health Plan” means a health plan that has adopted this clinical policy and that is operated or administered, in whole or in part, by Centene Management Company, LLC, or any of such health plan’s affiliates, as applicable.

The purpose of this clinical policy is to provide a guide to medical necessity, which is a component of the guidelines used to assist in making coverage decisions and administering benefits. It does not constitute a contract or guarantee regarding payment or results. Coverage

decisions and the administration of benefits are subject to all terms, conditions, exclusions and limitations of the coverage documents (e.g., evidence of coverage, certificate of coverage, policy, contract of insurance, etc.), as well as to state and federal requirements and applicable Health Plan-level administrative policies and procedures.

This clinical policy is effective as of the date determined by the Health Plan. The date of posting may not be the effective date of this clinical policy. This clinical policy may be subject to applicable legal and regulatory requirements relating to provider notification. If there is a discrepancy between the effective date of this clinical policy and any applicable legal or regulatory requirement, the requirements of law and regulation shall govern. The Health Plan retains the right to change, amend or withdraw this clinical policy, and additional clinical policies may be developed and adopted as needed, at any time.

This clinical policy does not constitute medical advice, medical treatment or medical care. It is not intended to dictate to providers how to practice medicine. Providers are expected to exercise professional medical judgment in providing the most appropriate care, and are solely responsible for the medical advice and treatment of members/enrollees. This clinical policy is not intended to recommend treatment for members/enrollees. Members/enrollees should consult with their treating physician in connection with diagnosis and treatment decisions.

Providers referred to in this clinical policy are independent contractors who exercise independent judgment and over whom the Health Plan has no control or right of control. Providers are not agents or employees of the Health Plan.

This clinical policy is the property of the Health Plan. Unauthorized copying, use, and distribution of this clinical policy or any information contained herein are strictly prohibited. Providers, members/enrollees and their representatives are bound to the terms and conditions expressed herein through the terms of their contracts. Where no such contract exists, providers, members/enrollees and their representatives agree to be bound by such terms and conditions by providing services to members/enrollees and/or submitting claims for payment for such services.

Note: For Medicaid members/enrollees, when state Medicaid coverage provisions conflict with the coverage provisions in this clinical policy, state Medicaid coverage provisions take precedence. Please refer to the state Medicaid manual for any coverage provisions pertaining to this clinical policy.

Note: For Medicare members/enrollees, to ensure consistency with the Medicare National Coverage Determinations (NCD) and Local Coverage Determinations (LCD), all applicable NCDs, LCDs, and Medicare Coverage Articles should be reviewed prior to applying the criteria set forth in this clinical policy. Refer to the CMS website at <http://www.cms.gov> for additional information.

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