

Clinical Policy: Readmission Review

Reference Number: IL.CP.MP.505

Last Review Date: 01/26

[Coding Implications](#)

[Revision Log](#)

See [Important Reminder](#) at the end of this policy for important regulatory and legal information.

Description

The Meridian Preventable Readmission Review Program is a component of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and State Medicaid guidelines. A readmission is defined as a subsequent inpatient readmission within 30 days after discharge, or as specified by state regulations or provider contracts, that is clinically related to the initial admission, is determined to be a Potential Preventable Readmission and is to the same hospital or with the same hospital system.

Policy/Criteria

A. Clinically Related Admissions

1. A readmission is considered to be clinically related to the initial admission if it is identified to be applicable to **at least one** of the following categories:
 - a. Member is discharged before all medical treatment is completed. This includes a readmission related to the initial admission or closely related condition.
 - b. Member is discharged after surgery and readmitted due to a continuation or recurrence of the problem causing the initial admission, or to manage a complication resulting from the care during the initial admission.
 - c. The readmission is potentially preventable by the provision of appropriate care consistent with accepted standards, based on software, in the prior discharge or during the post-discharge follow up period.
2. *Patient Non-Compliance:* Facilities will not be held accountable for patient noncompliance if **all** of the following conditions are met:
 - a. The member fails to follow the discharge plan of the first admission.
 - b. There is adequate documentation that physician orders have been appropriately and adequately communicated to the patient or their designated caregiver.
 - c. There is adequate documentation that the patient or designated caregiver is mentally competent and capable of following the instructions, and made an informed decision not to follow them.
 - d. There were no financial or other barriers to following instructions. (Note: The medical records should document reasonable efforts by the facility to address placement and access-to-treatment difficulties due to financial constraints or social issues, including consultation with social services, use of community resources, and frank discussions of risks and alternatives.)

- e. The noncompliance is clearly documented in the medical record of the readmission. For example, documentation for a discharge to the home when the discharge is felt to be unsafe should include signature by the patient/caregiver as leaving Against Medical Advice (AMA). The documentation must further demonstrate the facility's attempt to educate member regarding possible complications due to non-compliance with care plan and likelihood of readmission.

Exclusions:

The following scenarios are excluded from the definition of a Potential Preventable Readmission under this policy:

- a. The second admission was a planned readmission
- b. metastatic malignancy
- c. multiple trauma
- d. burns
- e. neonatal
- f. obstetrical admissions
- g. transplant
- h. alcohol or drug detoxification
- i. sickle cell anemia
- j. certain HIV DRGs
- k. behavioral health related primary diagnosis at discharge
- l. transfers from one acute care hospital to another
- m. Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation facilities (SNF and Rehab) Hospitals defined in 89 Ill. Adm. Code 148.25(d)(4)[Long Term Acute Care Hospitals]
- n. Readmissions which are the result of shared responsibility between the facility and the plan, such as inadequate care coordination and poor discharge planning in which the plan had a role
- o. The admission was for an individual who was dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid, or was enrolled in a Medicaid Managed Care Entity (MCE)

Readmission Review

Pursuant to Medicare and Medicaid guidelines, Meridian has implemented a process of reviewing, adjudicating, and adjusting claims payments for inpatient admissions that are deemed to be readmissions.

A. Procedure Prospective Readmission Review

- Meridian reserves the right to evaluate subsequent admissions as outlined above prior to payment.
- Meridian will identify which admissions are most likely avoidable or preventable readmissions and deny the second admission. The identification is based on billed DRGs, as well as the same or similar diagnoses found on the two related hospital claims.
- If the provider disagrees with Meridian's determination, the provider

has the right to dispute or appeal the determination. The provider must submit records for both admissions to Meridian, or its contracted vendor, to determine if the second admission was preventable or related to the first admission.

- If a provider disputes the denial and it is found the second admission was neither related nor preventable, Meridian will release payment for the second admission.
- If a provider disputes the denial and Meridian determines the second admission was preventable or related to the index hospitalization, the provider will be notified and the denial will be upheld.

B. Procedure Retrospective Readmission Review

- Meridian reserves the right to look back within the maximum allowed recovery period per state or federal guidelines, or as otherwise specified in the provider's contract, to identify any claims that may be readmissions.
- Meridian will identify which claims that are most likely avoidable or preventable readmissions and request a refund. The identification is based on billed DRGs, as well as the same or similar diagnoses found the two related hospital claims.
- If the provider disagrees with Meridian's determination, the provider has the right to appeal/dispute the determination. The provider must submit medical records for both admissions to Meridian or its contracted vendor. Meridian will evaluate the records to determine if the second admission was preventable or related to the first admission.
- If it is determined that the second record is not a related readmission, the provider will be notified and the refund request will be canceled.
- If Meridian determines that the second admission was preventable or related to the index hospitalization, the provider will be notified and subject to the refund request.

Recommended Documentation to Submit with a dispute/appeal:

- Case Management/Social Work Notes
- Consultations
- Physician Orders
- Discharge Instructions
- Discharge Medication List
- Discharge Summary
- Therapy Notes
- ER Report
- History and Physical
- Itemized Bill
- Medication Administration
- Nursing Notes
- Operative Report
- Pathology Report
- Physician Orders
- Physician Progress Notes
- Respiratory/Ventilation Sheets
- TAR (Treatment Administration Record)
- UB 92 or UB 04 form

Documentation to Exclude: Consent Forms; Dietary Notes; Duplicate Pages; Flow Sheets; and Holter Monitor Tracings.

Definitions of prepayment, and post-service reviews are:

Pre-Adjudication Review

All inpatient facility claims submitted for a member, which would qualify as a readmission within 30 days (or as otherwise stated by State and/or provider contract) of a discharge from an acute care hospital (the same OR different facility) will be subject for clinical review in one of two ways:

- If submitted with medical records the claim will pend for Medical Claims Review (MCR); *or*
- If not submitted with medical records, the claim will deny indicating that records are required. Submitted medical records must include all documentation from EACH related inpatient stay, even if at different, unrelated facilities

Post-Payment/Adjustment Review: All Diagnostic Related Group (DRG) paid claims are extracted on a report and provided to the medical review team. The team compares their criteria to the DRG report. They verify whether or not the diagnoses are part of the excluded list and/or related to previous admissions. If it is determined that a claim may be related to a previous admission (thus could possibly be deemed a readmission), then medical records are requested from the facility for all related admissions. All claims and the related medical records, for all related admissions, are reviewed by a physician to make a final determination on whether or not the admission meets the criteria of a readmission. If it is determined to be a readmission, written notification is sent to facility and the appeals timeline begins. After all appeals timeframes are expired or appeals exhausted, claim is returned to Claims for adjustment.

As part of the post-service/pre-payment readmission review process, we will request and review medical records and supporting documentation relating to the initial admission, including discharge plans, and the subsequent admission. We may deny payment to the facility for the subsequent admission if it meets certain criteria and is determined to have been preventable based on those criteria.

- MHP reserves the right to look back within the maximum allowed recovery time frame per state guidelines or per specific provider contract to identify any claims that may be readmissions.
- MHP will identify claims that are most likely readmissions for denial or request a refund. If it is determined to be a readmission, written notification is sent to the facility and the appeals timeline begins.
- If the provider disagrees with MHP's determination, the provider has the right to appeal the determination. The provider must submit medical records for both admissions and a Meridian Health Plan Medical Director will evaluate the records to determine if the second admission is a readmission of the first admission.

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

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		12/2016
Annual update		06/2021
References to SMART Act removed from policy		3/2022
Annual update references were updated	05/23	06/23
HFS had requested MCO policies include several criteria. Review of our policy confirmed all criteria were included. The list of exclusions in the policy were moved up to improve the flow of the policy. Tables at the end of the policy referencing criteria as C or S categories were removed as these definitions pertained to reviews for Michigan requests.	01/25	01/25
Annual Review	01/26	03/2026

References

1. Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services.
<https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/Value-Based-Programs/HRRP/Hospital-Readmission-Reduction-Program> Last modified 01/06/20 8/8/2022
2. Joint Committee on Administrative Rules: (Amended at 43 Ill. Reg. 5734, effective May 2, 2019)
3. Coleman EA, et al: The Care Transitions Intervention: results of a randomized controlled trial. Archives of Internal Medicine, 2006;166(17):1822-1828
4. Naylor MD, Sochalski JA: Scaling up: bringing the Transitional Care Model into the mainstream. The Commonwealth Fund, November 2010; Pub. 1453, Vol. 103
5. Project BOOST – Better Outcomes for Older Adults through Safe Transitions. Implementation guide to improve care transitions. Society of Hospital Medicine, 2010
6. The Bridge Model. Illinois Transitional Care Consortium,
https://camdenhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Bridge-Overview_Dec-2016.pdf (accessed May 11/2023)
7. Counsell SR, et al: Geriatric Resources for Assessment and Care of Elders (GRACE): A new model of primary care for low-income seniors. Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, 2006; 54(7):1136-41.doi: 10.1111/j.1532-5415.2006.00791.x.<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16866688/>
8. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality: Preventing avoidable readmissions: information and tools for clinicians. Project RED,
<https://www.ahrq.gov/patientsafety/resources/improve-discharge/index.html> (accessed May 11/2023)
<https://www.ahrq.gov/patient-safety/settings/hospital/red/toolkit/index.html>
9. Bureau of Managed Care Managed Care Organizations Policy/Procedure MCO-050:
10. 89 Ill. Adm. Code 152.300, related to Adjustment for Potentially Preventable Readmissions,

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.

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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.

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