

Travel and Lodging for Transplants

Premera Blue Cross Medicare Advantage Benefit Interpretation—Original Medicare

Travel Benefit

A travel benefit is available for Medicare-covered transplant services when the approved transplant facility is at a distant location from the member’s primary residence. Prior authorization is required.

Medicare Guidelines

Medicare covers certain solid organ transplants at facilities that have a Medicare provider agreement and are certified by CMS for the relevant covered procedure. (Reference: CMS 100-03 Medicare National Coverage Determination (NCD) Manual Chapter 1 Part 4 § 260).

Medicare also covers certain other types of transplants, such as stem cell and cornea. These transplants may not be limited to CMS certified facilities. (Reference: CMS 100-03 Medicare National Coverage Determination (NCD) Manual Chapter 1 Part 2 § 110).

When a Medicare Advantage plan provides a Medicare covered transplant service at a distant location (further than the normal community patterns of care), the plan must:

- Provide reasonable transportation for the member and a companion to the distant facility and provide reasonable accommodations for the member and a companion while present in the distant location for the transplant care.

(Reference: CMS Medicare Managed Care Manual, Chapter 4 Benefits and Beneficiary Protections Benefits and Beneficiary Protections § 10.11 (Rev. 115, 08-23-13))

Applies

Coverage for travel and lodging related to a Medicare covered organ transplant is available for eligible Medicare Advantage members with an approved prior authorization for a covered Medicare organ transplant provided at a distant location under all individual Premera Blue Cross Medicare Advantage HMO plans.

Travel and lodging expenses are covered for the recipient (exclusive of inpatient hospital admission) and companion, subject to eligibility of the recipient and an approved prior authorization. The combined total maximum reimbursement allowed for travel and lodging per transplant episode of care is \$5,000. Lodging expenses are limited up to \$150 per day, which applies to the combined \$5,000 maximum.

Procedure

Transplant travel benefits require prior authorization and are subject to the plan benefits and criteria outlined below.

- Travel reimbursement is limited to the evaluation, the trip to the transplant center for the transplant procedure, and the initial post-transplant period after discharge if the transplant program requires the member to remain in the local area of the transplant facility.

- For this travel benefit, two or more organs (i.e., heart and lungs) transplanted during one hospitalization are considered one transplant and reimbursed subject to the \$5,000 combined maximum for the episode of care.
- Lodging expenses are limited up to \$150 per day and apply to the combined \$5,000 travel and lodging maximum.

Transplant travel includes: air, rail, automobile (personal vehicle or rental), or bus transport. If a rental vehicle is used, rental fees and gasoline are covered, but not mileage. Transportation related charges are limited to one roundtrip for the evaluation, and one roundtrip for the transplant. Automobile reimbursement for personal vehicle usage is based on roundtrip mileage from the member's home to the transplant center and is based on the federal mileage reimbursement rate for personal cars being driven for medical purposes. Premera Blue Cross will reimburse allowed mileage for use of personal vehicle (as per IRS guidelines) driven for medical or moving purposes.

- If private jet transport is medically necessary at the time an organ becomes available, it will be arranged by the transplant coordinator and is subject to the member's air ambulance medical benefit. This cost is not applied to the \$5,000 combined travel and lodging maximum.
- Expense reports, including legible receipts for travel, and lodging must be submitted within six months of incurred expense to be eligible for reimbursement.

Billing Codes Used for Claims Payment

A0090–non-emergency transportation per mile vehicle provided by individual (family member, self, neighbor) with vested interest
 A0100–non- emergency transportation, taxi
 A0110–non-emergency transportation, bus intra or interstate carrier
 A0140–non-emergency transportation and air travel (private or commercial) intra or interstate
 A0170–transportation, ancillary; parking, fees, tolls, other
 A0180–non-emergency transportation: ancillary: lodging-recipient
 A0200 – non-emergency transportation: ancillary: lodging-escort

Revision History

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