

Medical Necessity Guidelines: Home Health Care Services for Tufts Health Together, Tufts Health RITogether and Tufts Health Unify

Effective: October 21, 2020

Prior Authorization Required If <u>REQUIRED</u> , submit supporting clinical documentation pertinent to service request.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Applies to:</p> <p>COMMERCIAL Products</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tufts Health Plan Commercial products; Fax: 617.972.9409</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tufts Health Freedom Plan products; Fax: 617.972.9409</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CareLinkSM – Refer to CareLink Procedures, Services and Items Requiring Prior Authorization <p>TUFTS HEALTH PUBLIC PLANS Products</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tufts Health Direct – A Massachusetts Qualified Health Plan (QHP) (a commercial product); Fax: 888.415.9055</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tufts Health Together – MassHealth MCO Plan and Accountable Care Partnership Plans; Fax: 888.415.9055</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tufts Health RITogether – A Rhode Island Medicaid Plan; Fax: 857.304.6404</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tufts Health Unify* – OneCare Plan (a dual-eligible product); Fax: 857.304.6304</p> <p>*The MNG applies to Tufts Health Unify members unless a less restrictive LCD or NCD exists.</p> <p>SENIOR Products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tufts Health Plan Senior Care Options (SCO), (a dual-eligible product) – Refer to the Tufts Health Plan SCO Prior Authorization List Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO, (a Medicare Advantage product) – Refer to the Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO Prior Authorization and Inpatient Notification List 	

Note: While you may not be the provider responsible for obtaining prior authorization, as a condition of payment you will need to make sure that prior authorization has been obtained.

OVERVIEW

Home Health Services are skilled and supportive care services provided in the Member's home to meet skilled care needs and associated activities of daily living to allow the Member to safely stay in their home. Home Health Services incorporate a wide variety of skilled healthcare and supportive services provided by licensed and unlicensed professionals that assist people with health conditions or disabilities to carry out everyday activities. These services are designed to meet the needs of people with acute, chronic, and terminal illnesses or disabilities, who without this support might otherwise require services in an acute care or residential facility.

CLINICAL COVERAGE CRITERIA

1. Any Home Health Service must meet all of the following:
 - a. Determination by the Member's physician or podiatrist ("designated provider") that the Member has a medical condition including, but not limited to, recovering from an acute illness, injury, or surgical procedure, a chronic health condition, a terminal illness, or a disability that requires skilled intervention or treatment from a licensed nurse, physical therapist/physical therapy assistant, occupational therapist/certified occupational therapy assistant, or speech/ language therapist in the home.
 - b. Establishment of the designated provider's plan of care or clinical notes setting forth the designated provider's evaluation of the Member's medical condition and proposed treatment and services related to the Member's medical need for home health services.
 - c. Completion of a comprehensive evaluation of the Member by the home health agency's relevant service professional through which the Member's current medical status, disability, level of functioning, health, and psychosocial status is determined and confirms the presence of a condition requiring the need for specific services as designated under the criteria for the specific home health service as described in (3), below.

- d. Confirmation that the designated provider for the service is certified by DPH as a provider of Medicare home health services and enrolled with MassHealth as a provider of home health services.
2. Coverage of particular services will be based on the following:
- a. The type of professional services covered will be based on the degree of skill required for the tasks related to the Member's medical need.
 - b. The plan of care demonstrates that it will significantly improve/stabilize the Member's condition within a reasonable period of time, and/or maintain, prevent, or slow the worsening of function as a result of the condition in (1).
 - c. The amount, frequency, and duration of services are appropriate based upon professionally recognized standards of practice and the length of time required to perform the needed tasks related to the Member's condition in (1).
 - d. Demonstration that services are provided under the care of a licensed practitioner with a written treatment plan that has been developed in consultation with the relevant professional(s).

3. Home Health Service Criteria:

a. Teaching requirements for all Home Health Services

Teaching must be provided to the Member, member's family, or caregiver at every visit by the nurse or therapist in order to foster independence. Teaching may include how to manage the Member's treatment regimen, any ongoing teaching required due to a change in the procedure or the Member's condition, and the response to the teaching. If continued teaching is not reasonable, that assertion must be supported by sufficient documentation indicating that teaching was unsuccessful or unnecessary and why further teaching is not reasonable.

b. Intermittent Skilled Nursing Visits

Intermittent skilled nursing refers to direct skilled nursing services that are needed to provide a targeted skilled nursing assessment for a specific medical need, and/or discrete procedures and/or treatments to treat the medical need. Intermittent skilled nursing visits are typically less than two consecutive hours, are limited to the time required to perform the designated procedures/treatments, and are based on the Member's needs, whether the illness or injury is acute, chronic, terminal, or expected to extend over a period of time.

Intermittent skilled nursing services may be considered medically necessary when the Member's medical condition requires one or more of the following:

- i. evaluation of nursing care needs;
- ii. development and implementation of a nursing care plan and provision of services that require the following specialized skills of a nurse:
 - a) skilled assessment and observation of signs and symptoms;
 - b) performing skilled nursing interventions including administering skilled treatments ordered by the prescribing practitioner;
 - c) assessing patient response to treatment and medications;
 - d) communicating changes in medical status to the prescribing practitioner; and
 - e) educating the Member and caregiver.

Intermittent skilled nursing services can be provided when the Member requires treatment that falls within the scope of nursing practice and is required in Massachusetts to be provided by a registered nurse, or by a licensed practical nurse under the supervision of a registered nurse; or when the Member requires treatment at a level of complexity and sophistication that can only be safely and effectively performed by a Licensed Registered Nurse or a Licensed Practical Nurse working under the supervision of a Registered Nurse.

Medication administration may occur as part of an intermittent skilled nursing visit for the purpose of the administration of medications ordered by the prescribing practitioner that generally requires the skills of a licensed nurse to perform or teach a Member or caregiver to perform independently.

Intravenous medication and infusion administrations will be treated as an intermittent skilled nursing visit due to the time required to complete these tasks.

c. Medication Administration Skilled Nursing Visits

A medication administration visit is a skilled nursing visit solely for the purpose of administering medications (other than intravenous medication or infusion administrations) ordered by the prescribing practitioner.

- i. Medication administration services may be considered medically necessary when medication administration is prescribed to treat a medical condition; no able caregiver is present; the task requires the skills of a licensed nurse; and at least one of the following conditions applies:
 - a) The Member is unable to perform the task due to impaired physical or cognitive issues, or behavioral and/or emotional issues;
 - b) The Member has a history of failed medication compliance resulting in a documented exacerbation of the Member's condition.
- ii. Medication administration visits include administration of the medication, documentation of that administration, observing for medication effects both therapeutic and adverse, and reporting adverse effects to the ordering practitioner. Intramuscular, subcutaneous, and other injectable medication administrations are considered skilled nursing tasks and will be treated as medication administration visits. Visits for medication administration via routes other than intravenous, intramuscular and/or subcutaneous medication including inhalers, nebulized medications, eye drops or topical medications will be considered as a medication administration visit only when the conditions below in 3.c.iii are met.
- iii. Certain medication administration tasks are not considered skilled nursing tasks, unless the complexity of the Member's condition or medication regimen requires the observation and assessment of a licensed nurse to safely perform. Such conditions include:
 - a) administration of oral, aerosolized, eye, ear and topical medication, which requires the skills of a licensed nurse only when the complexity of the condition(s) and/or nature of the medication(s) require the skilled observation and assessment of a licensed nurse and/or the Member/caregiver is unable to perform the task.
 - b) filling of weekly/monthly medication box organizers, which requires the skills of a licensed nurse only when the Member/caregiver is unable to perform the task.
- iv. Members receiving medication administration visits should be provided, at a minimum, one skilled nursing visit every 60 days to assess the plan of care and the Member's ongoing need for medication administration visits. Home health providers must request any additional skilled nursing visits along with their request for medication administration visits. The authorized number of skilled nursing visits will be determined based on medical necessity and submitted supporting documentation.
- v. Documentation of Medication Administration for Intermittent Skilled Nursing Visits and Medication Administration visits: Documentation requirements include the time of the visit; drug identification, dose, and route/ or reference to the Member's medication profile as ordered by the physician; teaching as applicable; documentation indicating that teaching was unsuccessful or unnecessary and why further teaching is not reasonable; the Member's response to the medication/s and the signature of the licensed nurse administering the medication. Documentation of skilled procedures performed in addition to medication administration during an intermittent skilled nursing visit should also occur.

d. Continuous Skilled Nursing

Continuous Skilled Nursing is the provision of direct skilled nursing services for more than two consecutive hours in duration in the home by eligible providers. This Medical Necessity Guideline does not apply to Continuous Skilled Nursing.

e. Physical Therapy

Physical therapy emphasizes a form of rehabilitation focused on treatment of dysfunctions involving neuromuscular, musculoskeletal, cardiovascular/ pulmonary, or integumentary systems through the use of therapeutic interventions to optimize functional levels.

Physical therapy services may be considered medically necessary when:

- i. The Member presents signs and symptoms of physical deterioration, impairment, or illness and requires treatment from a physical therapist including diagnostic evaluation,

- therapeutic intervention, member and caregiver training in a home program and communicating changes in functional status to the prescribing practitioner.
- ii. The Member's condition requires treatment of a level of complexity and sophistication that can only be safely and effectively performed by a licensed physical therapist (PT) or a physical therapy assistant (PTA) under the supervision of a PT.

MassHealth does not cover services related to activities for the general good and welfare of patients such as general exercise to promote overall fitness and flexibility and activities to provide diversion or general motivation.

While MassHealth may pay for the establishment of a physical therapy maintenance program, the MassHealth agency does not pay for the performance of a maintenance program for physical therapy, except in the limited circumstance when the specialized knowledge and judgment of a licensed therapist is required to perform services that are part of the maintenance program, to ensure safety or effectiveness that may otherwise be compromised due to the Member's medical condition. At the time the decision is made that the services in a maintenance program must be performed by a licensed physical therapist, all information that supports the medical necessity for performance of such services by a licensed physical therapist, rather than a non-therapist, must be documented in the Member's medical record.

A PT may also supervise the work of home-health aides (HHA) following an established plan of care providing the Member has a skilled PT need.

f. Occupational Therapy

Therapy services, including diagnostic evaluation and therapeutic intervention, designed to improve, develop, correct, rehabilitate, prevent, maintain, or slow the worsening of functions that affect the activities of daily living that have been lost, impaired, or reduced as a result of acute or chronic medical conditions, congenital anomalies, or injuries. Occupational therapy programs are designed to improve quality of life by recovering competence and preventing further injury or disability, and to improve the individual's ability to perform tasks required for independent functioning, so that the individual can engage in activities of daily living.

Occupational therapy services may be considered medically necessary when:

- i. The Member presents signs and symptoms of functional impairment/injury and requires treatment from an occupational therapist including diagnostic evaluation, therapeutic intervention, member and caregiver training in a home program, and communicating changes in functional status to the prescribing physician.
- ii. The Member's condition requires treatment of a level of complexity and sophistication that can only be safely and effectively performed by a licensed occupational therapist (OT) or a licensed occupational therapy assistant (OTA) supervised by an OT.

MassHealth does not cover services related to activities for the general good and welfare of patients such as general exercise to promote overall fitness and flexibility and activities to provide diversion or general motivation.

While MassHealth may pay for the establishment of an occupational therapy maintenance program, the MassHealth agency does not pay for the performance of a maintenance program for occupational therapy, except in the limited circumstance when the specialized knowledge and judgment of a licensed therapist is required to perform services that are part of the maintenance program, to ensure safety or effectiveness that may otherwise be compromised due to the Member's medical condition. At the time the decision is made that the services in a maintenance program must be performed by a licensed occupational therapist, all information that supports the medical necessity for performance of such services by a licensed therapist, rather than a non-therapist, must be documented in the Member's medical record.

An OT may also supervise the work of home-health aides (HHA) following an established plan of care providing the Member has a skilled OT need.

g. Speech-language Therapy

Speech-language therapy programs are designed to treat disorders that affect articulation of speech, language, cognitive communication and/or swallowing abilities that have been lost,

impaired, or reduced as a result of acute or chronic medical conditions, congenital anomalies or injuries.

Speech-language therapy may be considered medically necessary when:

- i. The Member presents with a condition described above and requires treatment from a speech-language therapist, including diagnostic evaluation, therapeutic intervention, member and caregiver training in a home program, and communicating changes in functional status to the prescribing physician.
- ii. The Member's condition requires treatment of a level of complexity and sophistication that can only be safely and effectively performed by a licensed speech-language pathologist (SLP).

An SLP may also supervise the work of home-health aides (HHA) following an established plan of care providing the Member has a skilled speech-language need.

h. Home Health Aide Services

Home-health aides (HHAs) are trained personnel who provide health-related personal care and/or assist members following an established plan of care ordered by the prescribing practitioner.

Tufts Health Together may authorize medically necessary home health aide services when the following conditions are met:

1. Home health aide services are medically necessary and
 - a. are provided pursuant to skilled nursing or therapy services; and/or
 - b. provide hands-on assistance throughout the task or until completion, with at least 2 activities of daily living (ADLs) defined as: bathing, grooming, dressing, toileting/continence, transferring/ambulation, and eating.
2. The frequency and duration of the home health aide services must be ordered by the physician and must be included in the plan of care for the Member.
3. The services are medically necessary to provide personal care to the Member, to maintain the Member's health, or to facilitate treatment of the Member's injury or illness.
4. The home health aide is supervised by a registered nurse or therapist, as applicable.
 - a. For members receiving home health aide services pursuant to a skilled nursing or therapy need, the home health aide is supervised by a registered nurse or therapist for skilled nursing services or therapy services, respectively.
 - b. For members who are receiving home health aide services not pursuant to a skilled nursing or therapy need, a registered nurse must make an on-site visit no less frequently than every 60 days in order to observe and assess each home health aide while he or she is performing care.

Please note that Tufts Health Together does not pay for homemaker, respite, or chore services. When a home health aide visits a Member to provide a health-related service, the home health aide may also perform some incidental services that do not meet the definition of a home health aide service (for example, light cleaning, preparing a meal, removing trash). However, the purpose of a home health aide visit must not be to provide these incidental services, since they are not health-related services.

NOTE: For extended home care services for Tufts Health RITogether, please reference Medical Necessity Guidelines: [Extended Home Care Services](#).

LIMITATIONS

Tufts Health Together does not consider Home Health Services to be medically necessary under certain circumstances. Examples of such circumstances include, but are not limited to, the following.

1. The service is for a disorder not associated with a medical or behavioral health condition.
2. The service replicates concurrent services provided in a different setting with similar treatment goals, plans, and therapeutic modalities.
3. The service replicates concurrent services provided by a different provider in the same setting with similar treatment goals, plans, and therapeutic modalities.

4. The services are primarily educational, emotional, or psychological in nature.
5. The services are more appropriately provided in a setting other than the member's home or the member's need is such that home-based services will not meet the need.
6. The condition(s) does not require the level of professional requested or the need can be met with a lower level of service.
7. The treatment is for a dysfunction that is self-correcting in nature and could reasonably be expected to improve without treatment.
8. The services of a licensed nurse to fill or assist the member in filling daily medication box organizers on a daily basis except as covered under Section II.A.3.c.iii.b.
9. Maintenance of functional skills that do not require the level of sophistication and training of a licensed PT, OT, or SLP.
10. The treatment is for educational, vocational, or recreational purposes.
11. There is no clinical documentation or treatment plan to support the need for the service or continuing the service.
12. Services are considered research or experimental in nature.

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS

The initial skilled nursing (SN), and/or physical therapy (PT) home care assessment/evaluation visit does not require prior authorization for Tufts Health Together members. *Speech therapy, occupational therapy and/or social worker visit will require prior authorization for the initial evaluation when provided independently and not in conjunction with physical therapy or skilled nursing visits.*

Providers requesting authorization must submit a thoroughly completed [Universal Health Plan/Home Health Authorization Form \(UHHA\)](#) to the appropriate fax number listed above.

Home Health Aide Services for Hands-On Assistance with ADLs (without concurrent skilled service)

Prior authorization of home health aide services for hands-on assistance with ADLs is required prior to the initiation of home health aide services when the member is not receiving concurrent skilled nursing or therapy services from the home health provider. Members may be authorized to receive home health aide services for hands-on assistance with ADLs for periods of up to 90 calendar days. Home health agencies are expected to begin discharge planning during the initial assessment visit of the member.

For initial requests of home health aide services for hands-on assistance with ADLs, the following additional documentation is required:

- Documentation of the physician's verbal order
- The initial assessment visit note conducted by a RN or therapist including a list of home health aide tasks that the member needs
- Member-specific discharge plans (may be included in the initial assessment visit note)

For members requiring a renewal to the authorization of home health aide services for hands-on assistance with ADLs, the following will be required:

- Signed Plan of Care
- Member-specific discharge plans reviewed and updated as applicable
- One week of home health aide notes
- The most recent RN visit note
- Home health aide services plan of care created by the aide's supervising RN

Skilled Nursing, Skilled Therapy, and Home Health Aide Services Provided with a Concurrent Skilled Service

Prior authorization for other home care services is required when services are daily or when the Member has been receiving home care services for six months and requires continued services.

CODES

The following CPT code(s) require prior authorization as outlined above:

Table 1: CPT/HCPCS Codes

CPT Code	Description
G0151	Services of Physical Therapist in home health setting, each 15 minutes

CPT Code	Description
G0152	Services of Occupational Therapist in home health setting, each 15 minutes
G0153	Services of Speech and Language Pathologist in home health setting, each 15 minutes
G0155	Services of Clinical Social Worker in home health setting, each 15 minutes (not applicable to Tufts Health Together)
G0156	Services of Home Health Aide in home setting, each 15 minutes
G0157	Services performed by a qualified physical therapy assistant in the home health setting, each 15 minutes
G0158	Services performed by a qualified occupational therapy assistant in the home health setting, each 15 minutes
G0162	Skilled services by a registered nurse (RN) in the delivery of management and evaluation of the plan care, each 15 minutes
G0299	Direct skilled nursing services of a registered nurse (RN) in the home health or hospice setting, each 15 minutes
G0300	Direct skilled nursing services of a license practical nurse (LPN) in the home health or hospice setting, each 15 minutes
G0493	Skilled services of a registered nurse (RN) for the observation and assessment of the patient's condition, each 15 minutes (the change in the patient's condition requires skilled nursing personnel to identify and evaluate the patient's need for possible modification of treatment in the home health or hospice setting)
G0494	Skilled services of a licensed practical nurse (LPN) for the observation and assessment of the patient's condition, each 15 minutes (the change in the patient's condition requires skilled nursing personnel to identify and evaluate the patient's need for possible modification of treatment in the home health or hospice setting)
G2168	Services performed by a physical therapist assistant in the home health setting in the delivery of a safe and effective physical therapy maintenance program, each 15 minutes
G2169	Services performed by an occupational therapist assistant in the home health setting in the delivery of a safe and effective occupational therapy maintenance program, each 15 minutes
T1002	RN Services, up to 15 minutes
T1003	LPN/LVN Services, up to 15 minutes
T1502	Administration of oral, intramuscular and/or subcutaneous medication by health care agency/professional, per visit
T1503	Administration of medication, other than oral and/or injectable, by a health care agency/professional, per visit
99501	Early Maternity Discharge Visit or Maternal Child Home Visit- Home visit for postnatal assessment and follow-up care (one visit only)
99211	Office or other outpatient visits for Evaluation and Management. A visit is up to 30 minutes

REFERENCES

1. Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Health and Human Services. MassHealth Guidelines for Medical Necessity Determination for Home Health Services. Available at: mass.gov/lists/masshealth-guidelines-for-medical-necessity-determination-h-v#home-health-services. Last accessed June 17, 2019.
2. Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Health and Human Services. MassHealth Home Health Agency Bulletin 54. Available at mass.gov/files/documents/2019/06/17/pb-hha-54.pdf . Last accessed June 17, 2019.

APPROVAL HISTORY

June 19, 2019: Reviewed by the Integrated Medical Policy Advisory Committee (IMPAC) for an effective date of July 1, 2019.

Subsequent endorsement date(s) and changes made:

- October 16, 2016: Reviewed by IMPAC, codes T1502 and T1503 added to Table 1, effective November 1, 2019.
- April 1, 2020: Coding updated. Per AMA CPT®, effective April 1, 2020 the following code(s) added: G2168, G2169.
- April 3, 2020: Fax number for Unify updated
- October 21, 2020: Reviewed by IMPAC, renewed without changes

BACKGROUND, PRODUCT AND DISCLAIMER INFORMATION

Medical Necessity Guidelines are developed to determine coverage for benefits, and are published to provide a better understanding of the basis upon which coverage decisions are made. We make coverage decisions using these guidelines, along with the Member's benefit document, and in coordination with the Member's physician(s) on a case-by-case basis considering the individual Member's health care needs.

Medical Necessity Guidelines are developed for selected therapeutic or diagnostic services found to be safe and proven effective in a limited, defined population of patients or clinical circumstances. They include concise clinical coverage criteria based on current literature review, consultation with practicing physicians in our service area who are medical experts in the particular field, FDA and other government agency policies, and standards adopted by national accreditation organizations. We revise and update Medical Necessity Guidelines annually, or more frequently if new evidence becomes available that suggests needed revisions.

For self-insured plans, coverage may vary depending on the terms of the benefit document. If a discrepancy exists between a Medical Necessity Guideline and a self-insured Member's benefit document, the provisions of the benefit document will govern.

Treating providers are solely responsible for the medical advice and treatment of Members. The use of this guideline is not a guarantee of payment or a final prediction of how specific claim(s) will be adjudicated. Claims payment is subject to eligibility and benefits on the date of service, coordination of benefits, referral/authorization, utilization management guidelines when applicable, and adherence to plan policies, plan procedures, and claims editing logic.

[Provider Services](#)