Medical Necessity Guidelines: Non-Emergency Ambulance Transportation – Ground

Effective: July 24, 2023

Prior Authorization Required
If REQUIRED, submit supporting clinical documentation pertinent to service request.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applies to:</th>
<th>Yes ☒ No ☐</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMERCIAL Products</td>
<td>☒ Tufts Health Plan Commercial products; Fax: 617.972.9409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☒ CareLinkSM – Refer to CareLink Procedures, Services and Items Requiring Prior Authorization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUFTS HEALTH PUBLIC PLANS Products</td>
<td>☒ Tufts Health Direct – A Massachusetts Qualified Health Plan (QHP) (a commercial product); Fax: 888.415.9055</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☒ Tufts Health Together – MassHealth MCO Plan and Accountable Care Partnership Plans; Fax: 888.415.9055</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Tufts Health RITogether – A Rhode Island Medicaid Plan; Fax: 857.304.6404</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☒ Tufts Health Unify* – OneCare Plan (a dual-eligible product); Fax: 857.304.6304</td>
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<td>*The MNG applies to Tufts Health Unify members unless a less restrictive LCD or NCD exists.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SENIOR Products</td>
<td>☒ Tufts Health Plan Senior Care Options (SCO), (a dual-eligible product) – Refer to the Tufts Health Plan SCO Prior Authorization List</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☒ Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO, (a Medicare Advantage product) – Refer to the Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO Prior Authorization and Inpatient Notification List</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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
The plan utilizes this medical necessity guideline for the review of all non-emergency ground ambulance transportation. Ground ambulance transportation is defined as ambulance services provided by a motor vehicle over roadways.

For Tufts Health Together Members
- Transportation to a service that is located outside a 50-mile radius of the Massachusetts border requires prior authorization from the plan
- Services in-state or within 50 miles of the Massachusetts border or return trip farther than 50 miles of the Massachusetts border are covered as a wrap benefit by MassHealth. Refer to MassHealth at 800-841-2900 for prior authorization requirements

For Tufts Health Unify Members
- Transportation to a service that is located farther than 50 miles from the member's home or pick-up address requires prior authorization from the plan
- Refer to Tufts Health Unify at 855-393-3154 to request transportation to a service under 50 miles from the member's home or pick-up address

Note: This policy does not apply to Tufts health RITogether:
- All non-emergency transportation services are covered as a wrap benefit by Rhode Island Medicaid. Refer to Tufts Health Plan at 844-301-4093 for more information.

CLINICAL COVERAGE CRITERIA
The plan may cover non-emergency, basic or advanced life support, ground ambulance transportation when all of the following criteria are met:
- The medical condition of the member prevents safe transportation by any other means
The transportation is for the transport to and/or from medically necessary care.

The member's condition prohibits other forms of transportation:
- The member is bed confined. (This is defined as: unable to get out of bed without assistance, unable to ambulate, and unable to sit in a chair or wheelchair.)

OR
- Other means of transportation is contraindicated for medical reasons. Examples include but are not limited to the following:
  a. The member cannot safely sit upright while seated in a wheelchair.
  b. The member can tolerate a wheelchair, but is medically unstable.
  c. The member requires oxygen and oxygen saturation level monitoring, in the absence of a portable oxygen system, to treat hypoxemia, syncope, airway obstruction and/or chest pain.
  d. The member requires skilled/trained monitoring during transport for the following:
     - The member is comatose.
     - The member requires airway monitoring.
     - The member requires cardiac monitoring.
     - The member is dependent on a ventilator.

**LIMITATIONS**
- For Tufts Health Plan Commercial and Direct, the plan will not cover chair car or wheelchair van transportation. For Tufts Health Together and Unify, chair car or wheelchair van transportation are covered.
- Tufts Health Plan will not cover an ambulance when an alternative means of transportation other than an ambulance could be utilized without endangering the member's health, whether or not such other transportation is available or is a covered benefit.
- Tufts Health Plan will not cover transportation for the purpose of receiving an excluded or non-covered service.

**CODES**
The following HCPCS codes may be subject to retrospective review for medical necessity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A0425</td>
<td>Ground mileage, per statute mile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A0426</td>
<td>Ambulance service, advanced life support, non-emergency transport, level 1 (ALS 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A0428</td>
<td>Ambulance service, basic life support, non-emergency transport (BLS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REFERENCES**

**APPROVAL HISTORY**
July 14, 2006: Reviewed by the Clinical Coverage Criteria Committee

Subsequent endorsement date(s) and changes made:
- October 1, 2007: Reviewed and renewed without changes
- October 1, 2008: The Medical Necessity Guideline for Non-emergency Ambulance Transport (ID# 2099126) has been separated into two Medical Necessity Guidelines; the Medical Necessity Guideline for Non-emergency Ambulance Transport: Ground and the Medical Necessity Guideline for Non-emergency Ambulance Transport – Air
- October 7, 2009: HCPCS Code A0425 added to list of codes requiring prior authorization
- December 2009: Reviewed by Medical Policy, no changes
- December 16, 2009: HCPCS code may be subject to retrospective review for medical necessity
- December 2010: Reviewed by Medical Policy, no changes
- December 14, 2011: Reviewed by the Integrated Medical Policy Advisory Committee (IMPAC), no changes
- December 12, 2012: Reviewed by IMPAC, no changes
- December 11, 2013: Reviewed by IMPAC, renewed without changes

November 19, 2014: Reviewed by IMPAC, renewed without changes

August 12, 2015: Reviewed by IMPAC, renewed without changes

September 2015: Branding and template change to distinguish Tufts Health Plan products in "Applies to" section. Added Tufts Health Freedom Plan products, effective January 1, 2016.

September 14, 2016: Reviewed by IMPAC, renewed without changes

April 2017: Added RITogether Plan product to template. For MNGs applicable to RITogether, effective date is August 1, 2017

August 9, 2017: Reviewed by IMPAC, renewed without changes

October 10, 2018: Reviewed by IMPAC, renewed without changes

October, 2018: Template and disclaimer updated

October 16, 2019: Reviewed by IMPAC, renewed without changes

November 18, 2020: Reviewed by IMPAC, added exception for Tufts Health Freedom members for interfacility transportation effective July 29, 2020

December 1, 2020: Fax number for Unify updated

December 21, 2021: Reviewed by Medical Policy Approval Committee (MPAC) for integration purposes with Harvard Pilgrim Health Care. In the Overview section, clarified prior authorization for Tufts Health Together and Unify and removed Tufts Health RITogether from this policy as transportation services are covered as a wrap benefit by Rhode Island Medicaid.

February 1, 2022: Template Updated

December 1, 2022: Reviewed by MPAC, renewed without changes

July 24, 2023: Language regarding wheelchair vans clarified for Unify

**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.