**Coverage Guidelines: Outpatient Psychotherapy**

*Effective: November 8, 2017*

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<td>☒ Tufts Health Plan Commercial Plans products; Fax: 617.972.9409</td>
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<td>☐ Tufts Health Direct – Health Connector; Fax: 888.415.9055</td>
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<td>☐ Tufts Health Together – A MassHealth Plan; Fax: 888.415.9055</td>
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<td>☐ Tufts Health Unify – OneCare Plan; Fax: 781.393.2607</td>
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**OVERVIEW**

Medically Necessary Outpatient psychotherapy services are covered for the diagnosis and treatment of mental health and substance use disorders specified in the most recent Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM)™ or with the most recent International Classification of Diseases (ICD). The reported diagnosis should support the current symptom presentation and should be the focus of treatment. Coverage for outpatient psychotherapy requires notification.

**COVERAGE GUIDELINES**

Medically Necessary Outpatient Psychotherapy services, delivered by a provider licensed in a discipline recognized by Tufts Health Plan are covered when the following are met:

Must meet either A or B

**A.** Meet all three of these criteria:

1. When clinical data provide clear evidence of signs and symptoms consistent with a mental health or substance use disorder as defined in the most recent DSM or ICD.
2. And when there is a treatment plan, with measurable goals and approaches, that address the signs and symptoms of the patient’s mental health or substance use disorder and that is consistent with current professional practice standards.
3. And when there is no less intensive or more appropriate level of service that can be safely and effectively provided.

**Or**

**B.** When clinical data indicate that the Member’s condition has stabilized and continued treatment at a less frequent maintenance level is needed to sustain the current level of functioning.

**LIMITATIONS**

Tufts Health Plan will not cover outpatient psychotherapy under the following circumstances:

- Regardless of medical necessity, services listed as exclusions, or not listed as covered benefits, in the member’s benefit document.
- Services that could safely and effectively be provided at a lesser frequency or intensity.
- Therapy visits more than once a week except in situations of acute crisis for a brief period of time. For example, situations when there is a risk of hospitalization, severe symptoms and/or severe functional impairments.
- When services are not documented in a medical record containing contemporaneous progress notes.

**CODES**

Ancillary providers may bill the following procedure codes:

**Procedure Codes for All Clinicians**

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<tr>
<th>Procedure Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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Outpatient Psychotherapy
### Procedure Code | Description
---|---
90791¹ | Psychiatric diagnostic evaluation (no medical services)
90785 | Interactive complexity (add on code)
90832 | Psychotherapy, 30 minutes with patient or family member
90834 | Psychotherapy, 45 minutes with patient or family member
90837 | Psychotherapy, 60 minutes with patient or family member
90839 | Psychotherapy for crisis, first 60 minutes
90840 | Psychotherapy for crisis, each additional 30 minutes (add on code)
90846 | Family Psychotherapy (without patient present)
90847 | Family Psychotherapy (with patient present )
90853 | Group Psychotherapy

### Additional Codes for Prescribing Clinicians - (Psychiatrists, prescribing nurse clinical specialists and MH clinics)

| Procedure Code | Description |
---|---|
99201² | New patient, office or outpatient visit, problem focused |
99202 | New patient, office or outpatient visit, expanded problem-focused |
99203 | New patient, office or outpatient visit, low complexity |
99204 | New patient, office or outpatient visit, moderate complexity |
99205 | New patient, office or outpatient visit, high complexity |
99211² | Established patient, office or outpatient visit, 5 minutes are spent |
99212² | Established patient, office or outpatient visit, 10 minutes are spent |
99213² | Established patient, office or outpatient visit, low complexity |
99214 | Established patient, office or outpatient visit, moderate complexity |
99215 | Established patient, office or outpatient visit, high complexity |
90792¹ | Psychiatric diagnostic evaluation with medical services |
90833 | Psychotherapy, 30 minutes with patient or family member with an evaluation & management service |
90836 | Psychotherapy, 45 minutes with patient or family member with an evaluation & management service |
90838 | Psychotherapy, 60 minutes with patient or family member with an evaluation & management service |

**Note:** for information about our notification process for outpatient therapy visits, please refer to the [Outpatient Behavioral Health/Substance Use Disorder Professional Payment Policy](#). The policy states that upon an outpatient notification, 8 visits will be granted. Subsequent notifications will grant an additional 8 visits.

**APPROVAL HISTORY**

- July 28, 2010: Addition of statement regarding therapy visits rendered more than once a week.
- September 28, 2011: Reviewed and renewed with changes: Moved statement regarding documentation of services in a medical record and added services that are not medically necessary to Limitations section.
- September 20, 2012: Reviewed and approved by the Mental Health Operations and Policy Committee. Removed: ”Services are not delivered in a healthcare facility or professional office”. Added “Any service, supply or procedure performed in a non-conventional setting (including, but not limited to, spas/resorts, therapeutic programs, and camps)”
- January 1, 2013: Add new 2013 CPT codes, Delete end dated 2012 CPT codes

¹ Billing is limited to two 90791 or 90792 procedure codes per provider, per Member, per calendar year.
² Billing 99201, 99211, 99212 or 99213 alone or with 90785 does not require authorization. These medical management services do not decrement the Member’s mental health benefit.
• February 8, 2013: Added; "Billing 99201, 99211, 99212 or 99213 alone or with 90785 does not require authorization. These medical management services do not decrement the Member’s mental health benefit.”

• October 1, 2013: Reviewed and approved by the Mental Health Operations and Policy Committee with changes: Added "When clinical data provide evidence that the signs and symptoms of the patient’s mental health or substance use disorder are active, resulting in impairment in daily functioning, as evidenced by, but not limited to, one or more of the following: Functional impairments: Member is unable to work or attend school as required, Member requires assistance with ADLs, In the last 3 months from date of this request the Member: Is increasingly isolative, Has experienced a new interpersonal crisis, Has an active eating disorder, Has experienced frequent feelings of hopelessness and/or worthlessness, Has experienced sleep and/or appetite disturbance, Experienced a panic attack or increased anxiety, Experienced a decrease in their ability to control impulsive behavior, Engaged in self-injurious behaviors”; Removed “The Member is making progress toward symptom reduction”; change Substance abuse to substance use, added services provided in a school setting, “as part of an educational program”.

• November 5, 2014: Reviewed and approved by the Mental Health Operations and Policy Committee with changes: remove the fax number from the Type of Review box.

• March 16, 2015: Added fax number back into “Applies to” Section.

• September 8, 2015: reviewed and approved by the Mental Health Operations and Policy Committee with changes: Overview – added – “or with the most recent International Classification of Diseases (ICD). Coverage Guidelines: deleted – “for the assessment of symptoms to determine if a disorder is present” and added: Must meet all three of these criteria. Second bullet after DSM added – or with the most recent International Classification of Diseases (ICD). Added after 3rd bullet – AND must meet one of these criterions. Limitations: Removed – Services that are not medically necessary.

• 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.

• November 9, 2015: Updated to include New Hampshire Telemedicine mandate – approved by the Mental Health Operations and Policy Committee.

• December 3, 2015: Reviewed by the Behavioral Health Practitioner Advisory Committee with no changes recommended.

• December 9, 2015: Reviewed and approved by the Integrated Medical Policy Advisory Committee, description added to “overview” section outlining notification and authorization process.

• March 15, 2016: Reviewed by the Behavioral Health Operations and Policy Committee with recommended changes: Overview – deleted last sentence and replaced with “Coverage for services beyond those covered at initial notification may require submission of clinical documentation in order to receive continued coverage.” This change better reflects notification process and allows for medical necessity review.

• April 13, 2016: Reviewed and approved by the Integrated Medical Policy Advisory Committee with changes: Deleted last sentence of Overview section; shortened previous sentence by adding period after "Coverage for outpatient psychotherapy requires notification”. Under "coverage guidelines" changed from "approved" to "covered.”

• December 14, 2016: Reviewed by the Integrated Medical Policy Advisory Committee (IMPAC), renewed without changes

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

• July 11, 2017: Reviewed by Behavioral Health Operations and Policy Committee with the following changes: in overview section, deleted requirement for notification; In coverage guidelines section restructured coverage criteria, and removed “acute” as evidenced by but not limited to" time based criteria, in limitations section consolidated 4 bullet points on specific benefit exclusions to say: "Regardless of medical necessity, services listed as exclusions, or not listed as covered benefits, in the member’s benefit document.” in Codes section, changed word "ancillary” to “behavioral health”.

• November 3, 2017: Reviewed by Behavioral Health Practitioner Advisory Committee. Sentence added to coverage guidelines referencing other applicable telemedicine policies and guidelines.

• November 8, 2017: Reviewed by the Integrated Medical Policy Advisory Committee and approved with one change. Section on Telemedicine was removed.
• March 28, 2018: Reviewed by Behavioral Health Department, language added regarding number of granted visits with outpatient notification(s) and link added referencing “Outpatient Behavioral Health/Substance Use Disorder Professional Payment Policy.”

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.

Medical Necessity Guidelines apply to the fully insured Commercial and Medicaid products when Tufts Health Plan conducts utilization review unless otherwise noted in this guideline or in the Member’s benefit document, and may apply to Tufts Health Unify to the same extent as Tufts Health Together. This guideline does not apply to Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO, Tufts Health Plan Senior Care Options or to certain delegated service arrangements. 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. Applicable state or federal mandates or other requirements will take precedence. For CareLink℠ Members, Cigna conducts utilization review so Cigna’s medical necessity guidelines, rather than these guidelines, will apply.

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.