

## REFERRALS, PRIOR AUTHORIZATIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS

- [Referrals](#)
  - [Completing the Paper Referral Form](#)
  - [Electronic Referral Exclusions](#)
  - [Out-of-Area Services](#)
  - [Referral Inquiry](#)
  - [Referral Adjustments](#)
- [Prior Authorizations](#)
  - [Medical Coverage Prior Authorization Requests](#)
  - [Prescription Drugs Prior Authorization Requests](#)
  - [Pharmacy Plan Management Programs](#)
  - [Appeals and Grievances for Pharmacy Benefits](#)
  - [Organization Determinations](#)
  - [Benefit Exhaustions \(Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO members\)](#)
  - [Prior Authorization Lists](#)
- [Notifications](#)
  - [Inpatient Notification Process](#)
  - [Inpatient Notification Requirements](#)
  - [Submission Channels](#)
  - [Payment](#)
  - [Medicare-Approved Facility Requirement](#)

### Referrals

A referral verifies that the member's PCP has approved the member's request to receive services from a specialist provider. It is the responsibility of the PCP to ensure that the member is directed to the appropriate specialist. Referrals should be coordinated prior to services being rendered.

To ensure that appropriate specialty care is provided, the PCP initiates and coordinates the referral management process for Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO and/or Tufts Health Plan SCO members according to the following list:

- The PCP may approve a referral to a specialist in or out of the Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO or Tufts Health Plan SCO networks, indicating the specific services and number of visits to be provided to the member, when:
  - The PCP decides that such a referral is medically necessary
  - The specialist agrees to a treatment plan and provides the PCP with all necessary clinical and administrative information on a regular basis
  - The health care services to be provided are consistent with the terms of the member's plan benefits
- Specialists must submit a summary report on a timely basis to the medical group following the member's appointment.
- Any questions or problems regarding referrals should be directed to Senior Products Provider Relations at 800.279.9022.
- PCPs should not generate referrals for urgent/emergent services and should instead contact the Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO or Tufts Health Plan SCO care manager to notify of urgent/emergency care. Providers should contact Senior Products Provider Relations to identify the care manager assigned to the member. All PCP urgent/emergent admissions are reported to the group care manager on a daily basis on the Day of Admission report.
- Tufts Health Plan is financially responsible for any nonurgent/nonemergent outpatient care authorized by Tufts Health Plan that is provided outside the network; if authorized by the medical group that provides services (rather than Tufts Health Plan), the care is the financial responsibility of the medical group.
- If a contracting specialist provides a service without a referral from the member's PCP, the claim will be sent to the PCP's medical organization through a "10-day report" for review. If the PCP or group

representative agrees with the service provided, the claim will be released for adjudication. If the PCP disagrees with the services provided, the claim will deny and the contracting specialist will be held financially liable and the member cannot be billed.

Refer to the [Referral, Authorization and Notification Policy](#) for additional information.

### Completing the Paper Referral Form

The paper referral form requires information about the PCP, the member, and the consulting provider. To order paper referral forms, providers may fill out the [W.B. Mason Provider Forms Requisition](#) and fax it to W.B. Mason at 800.738.3272 or email it to [tuftshealthplan@wbmason.com](mailto:tuftshealthplan@wbmason.com).

The PCP must complete the referral form. If any required fields are left blank, the referral form will be returned to the PCP requesting additional information. Upon receipt, the Tufts Health Plan Claims Department enters the referral in the system.

Claim reviewers verify the date range on the referral matches the date of service on the claim. If no matching referral is found, the claim will pend for AUREQ (authorization/referral expired).

Member name, ID number, and date of birth are required for claim payment. Member information may be obtained from the following sources:

- Member ID card
- Individual Election Form
- Monthly Eligibility Listing Report
- Eligibility Inquiry on the secure Provider [portal](#)
- Change Healthcare™
- Integrated voice response (IVR) system at 800.279.9022

### Electronic Referral Exclusions

Tufts Health Plan referral policies apply to electronic referrals. However, certain services and/or coverage for certain specialties do not require referrals or may have alternative prior authorization or inpatient notification requirements, as applicable. Refer to the [Referral, Authorization and Notification Policy](#) as well as the Senior Products [payment policies](#) for specific authorization requirements, as applicable. Refer to the Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO [Prior Authorization and Inpatient Notification List](#) or the Tufts Health Plan SCO [prior authorization](#) and [notification](#) lists for specific procedures, items, and/or services that fall under these requirements.

### Out-of-Area Services

Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO/Tufts Health Plan SCO may provide coverage outside the service area to members in certain circumstances, including but not limited to the following:

- Urgently needed or emergency care (including post-stabilization services provided after an emergency)
- Kidney dialysis services provided by a Medicare-certified dialysis facility
- Medically necessary care that cannot be obtained from an in-network provider (e.g., a provider whose specialty is not contracted with Tufts Health Plan)

Providers may contact [Senior Products Provider Relations](#) to verify benefit coverage when the member is outside the service area.

### Referral Inquiry

Providers may check the status of an existing referral by using **Referral Status Inquiry** on the Tufts Health Plan secure Provider [portal](#). The referral status inquiry tool provides the status of referrals submitted to Tufts Health Plan, regardless of how the referral was initially submitted.

### Referral Adjustments

To request an adjustment to a referral that is already in the Tufts Health Plan system, the PCP must contact [Senior Products Provider Relations](#) for assistance. Tufts Health Plan cannot adjust referrals based on the specialist's request. If the specialist would like to request an adjustment to a referral, the specialist should follow up directly with the member's PCP.

## Prior Authorizations

A prior authorization (PA) may be required to determine medical necessity and appropriateness of certain health care services. Services that may require prior authorization include surgical services, durable medical equipment (DME), and/or [prescription drugs](#). Additional prior authorization information may be found in the [Referral, Authorization and Notification Policy](#).

### Medical Coverage Prior Authorization Requests

To obtain authorization for a medical service, device or equipment requiring prior authorization through the Precertification Operations Department, the provider must submit the appropriate clinical documentation for review. As a condition of payment, the treating/ordering provider is required to submit documentation of medical necessity for services requiring authorization. Documentation should detail:

- The member's diagnosis
- Planned treatment, including medical rationale for the service requested
- All pertinent medical information available for review.

Prior authorization requests should be faxed to the Precertification Operations Department at 617.972.9409. When the use of an InterQual® SmartSheet is required, it may be submitted without additional supporting documentation, unless otherwise indicated.

For Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO members, prior authorization can also be obtained through the MHK Portal via the secure Provider [portal](#). For more information refer to the [Commercial and Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO MHK Portal User Guide](#).

Refer to the [Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO](#) and [Tufts Health Plan SCO](#) prior authorization lists for specific nonpharmacy services, items and supplies that require PA.

### Prescription Drugs Prior Authorization Requests

Certain prescription medications require prior authorization through Tufts Health Plan. Providers may submit an electronic prior authorization (ePA) through their electronic medical record (EMR) system or through a third party ePA vendor for review by Tufts Health Plan.

For Part D drugs covered under the pharmacy benefit, providers must submit the [Request for Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Determination](#). For Part B drugs covered under the medical benefit, providers must submit the [Coverage Determination and Prior Authorization Request for Medicare Part B versus Part D](#) form.

Requests for Part D drug coverage determinations and exceptions may be submitted to the Pharmacy Utilization Management Department via the following:

**Fax:** 617.673.0956  
**Mail:** Tufts Health Plan  
Attn: Pharmacy Utilization Management Department  
1 Wellness Way  
Canton, MA 02021

Requests for Part B drug coverage determinations may be submitted to Precertification Operations Department via the following:

**Fax:** 617.972.9409  
**Mail:** Tufts Health Plan  
Attn: Precertification Operations Department  
1 Wellness Way  
Canton, MA 02021

### Exception Requests

All formulary exception requests require a supporting statement from the prescribing provider. The provider may submit the request using the [Request for Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Determination Form](#). This form requests information regarding diagnoses, what other drugs (if any) have been prescribed for the diagnoses and why they have not worked. The provider may submit via ePA, fax or mail options listed above. Providers

may also provide an oral supporting statement by calling Senior Products Provider Relations at 800.279.9022 (TTY 711), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.–8 p.m.

All **standard** coverage determination and exception requests will be made within **72 hours** after receipt of the request but may be up to 14 calendar days if supporting information is needed from the requesting provider.

All **expedited** coverage determination and exception requests will be made within **24 hours** after receipt of the request but may be up to 14 calendar days if supporting information is needed from the requesting provider.

**Note:** Coverage determinations may not exceed 14 calendar days from the date the request is received.

## Formulary

A formulary is a list of covered drugs selected for Tufts Health Plan in consultation with a team of health care providers. This list represents the prescription therapies believed to be a necessary part of a quality treatment program. Tufts Health Plan will cover drugs listed in the Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO and Tufts Health Plan SCO [formularies](#) as long as the drug is medically necessary, the prescription is filled at a network pharmacy, and all other plan rules are followed. If approved, the member will be covered for the drug. If denied, members and providers may follow the appeal process outlined in the [Member Appeals and Grievances](#) chapter.

**Note:** Some Part D drugs obtained at out-of-network pharmacies are covered by Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO and Tufts Health Plan SCO, as required by CMS and federal regulations (Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Manual, Chapter 6, Section 10.2: "[Part D Drugs and Formulary Requirements](#)," in accordance with 42CFR §423.124)

**Note:** The Tufts Health Plan comprehensive formulary includes the Part D formulary approved by CMS.

## Medicare Part D Transition

Tufts Health Plan may offer a temporary 30-day supply of prescription drugs that were either not on the previous year's formulary or that may have been restricted in some way. Members may receive this "transition fill" during the first 90 calendar days of new membership or the first 90 calendar days of the calendar year for existing members. If the member receives a transition fill, Tufts Health Plan will send a letter to the practitioner and the member detailing the nature of the temporary supply.

## Medications Covered by Original Medicare Part B

Tufts Health Plan provides coverage for most drugs and biologicals that are covered by Original Medicare Part B.

**Note:** Medications covered by Original Medicare Part B are not part of the member's Part D prescription drug benefit. Refer to the [Coverage Determination and Prior Authorization Request Form: Medicare "Part B versus Part D" Drugs](#) for more information.

Original Medicare-covered Part B medications include the following:

- Drugs billed by providers and typically provided in an office setting
- Drugs billed by pharmacy suppliers and administered through DME (e.g., respiratory drugs given through a nebulizer)
- Some drugs filled by the pharmacy (e.g., some immunosuppressant drugs depending upon use and some oral chemotherapy drugs)
- Some end-stage renal disease (ESRD) drugs

## Vaccines

Some vaccines are covered under the member's medical benefit (Part B) while others are covered under the pharmacy benefit (Part D). When vaccines are covered under Part D, the administration costs will be reimbursed under Medicare Part D. Refer to the [Immunization Payment Policy](#) for more information.

## Pharmacy Plan Management Programs

### Prior Authorization (PA)

The PA process encourages rational prescribing of drug products with significant safety and/or financial concerns. A provider can submit a request for coverage based on a member's medical need for a particular drug.

### Quantity Limit (QL)

Because of potential safety and utilization concerns, Tufts Health Plan has placed dispensing limitations on certain prescription drugs. Pharmacies may only dispense a certain quantity of these drugs within a given time period. These quantities are based on recognized standards of care, such as FDA recommendations for use. If a member needs a quantity greater than the program limitation, their prescribing provider may submit a formulary exception request for coverage under the medical review process.

### Step Therapy Prior Authorization (STPA)

Step therapy is an automated form of PA that uses claims history for approval of a drug at the point of sale. STPA programs help encourage the clinically proven use of first-line therapies and are designed to ensure the utilization of the most therapeutically appropriate and cost-effective agents first, before other treatments may be covered. Members who are currently on drugs that meet the initial STPA criteria will automatically be able to fill their prescriptions for a stepped medication. If the member does not meet the initial STPA criteria, the prescription will deny at the point of sale with a message indicating that PA is required.

### Medication Therapy Management (MTM) Program

Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO and Tufts Health Plan SCO members may be eligible for the Medication Therapy Management (MTM) Program. Eligible members are automatically enrolled in the program and are offered a one-to-one telephone consultation with a clinical pharmacist. Information gathered during this process, along with pharmacy claims, are used to develop clinical recommendations where appropriate. Pharmacist recommendations are faxed to the provider for consideration. Members will receive an individualized written summary of the consultation and comprehensive medication review (CMR) by mail. CMRs are offered at least once a year.

In addition, targeted medication reviews (TMRs) are done to assess medication use, monitor unresolved issues, and identify new drug therapy problems. These TMRs are performed on a quarterly basis with any recommendations sent to the provider via fax. Participation in the program is voluntary and a member can disenroll at any time.

For additional information on program eligibility criteria, refer to the [MTM Program](#) page.

### Appeals and Grievances for Pharmacy Benefits

Timelines for appeals and/or grievances for pharmacy benefits may differ from those surrounding preservice coverage determinations (also known as organization determinations). For more information regarding appeals and grievances, refer to the [Member Appeals and Grievances](#) chapter.

### Organization Determinations

The term "organization determination<sup>1</sup>" is a CMS term used to describe pre- and post-service coverage decisions made by Tufts Health Plan. Tufts Health Plan's processes may include prior authorization requests for services addressed in this chapter and other coverage decisions, such as benefit exhaustions.

Preservice organization determinations may be requested for any Medicare procedure, service, or supply, regardless of whether or not that service requires prior authorization. If the member disagrees with a treatment decision or plan of care, an organization determination may be initiated by the member, the member's authorized representative, or the provider on the member's behalf.

Once an organization determination is requested, Tufts Health Plan will:

- Validate that the requestor is approved to make a request

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<sup>1</sup> Tufts Health Plan SCO refers to pre- and post-service coverage decisions as integrated organization determinations.

- Determine whether the request is expedited or standard, as defined by CMS
- Collect and review the applicable coverage documents (e.g., Medicare regulations, member evidence of coverage [EOC], or supporting medical necessity documentation)
- Ensure that the member and provider are notified of coverage decisions within the required time frames

### Organization Determination Time Frames

Requests may be expedited if either the member or provider believes that waiting for a decision under the standard timeframe could place the member's life, health or ability to regain maximum function in serious jeopardy.

Tufts Health Plan follows CMS and EOHHS regulations regarding decision and notification time frames for organization determinations and expects contracting providers to be in compliance with these regulations. Providers may contact Provider Relations at 800.279.9022 with additional questions regarding the organization determination process.

Tufts Health Plan must notify the member of the determination as expeditiously as the member's condition requires but not later than the expiration of the time frames below:

- For standard requests, the member must be notified of the decision no later than 14 calendar days from the time of the request
- For expedited requests, the member must be notified of the decision no later than 72 hours from the time of the request

An extension to the above time frames may be requested under certain limited circumstances, as defined by CMS. Refer to the Tufts Health Plan [Utilization Review Determination Time Frames](#) for more information.

For Part B drug requests, Tufts Health Plan must notify the member of the determination as expeditiously as the member's condition requires but not later than the expiration of the time frames below:

- For standard Part B drug requests, the member must be notified of the decision no later than 72 hours from the time of the request
- For expedited Part B drug requests, the member must be notified of the decision no later than 24 hours from the time of the request

Part B drug timeframes cannot be extended.

### Organization Determination Process

In order to process an organization determination, Tufts Health Plan must collect and review all necessary supporting documentation to make a decision. Documentation may include, but not be limited to, the member's EOC, Medicare regulations (including LCD/NCDs), medical necessity guidelines and clinical documentation submitted by the provider.

It is expected that all Medicare-certified providers be familiar with the coverage regulations related to the services that they order and/or provide. Providers must participate in discussions with Tufts Health Plan medical directors and clinicians as needed to discuss coverage requests. Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO and Tufts Health Plan SCO providers are expected to submit all organization determination requests with sufficient clinical documentation for Tufts Health Plan to make a timely decision.

If a request is received with insufficient clinical information to make a decision, Tufts Health Plan will fax a request for more information (RFMI) letter to the provider (or call the provider in expedited cases). The RFMI letter includes the specific clinical information being requested, submission options, and a due date by which the information must be received by Tufts Health Plan in order to process the request within regulatory requirements.

In general, providers are asked to respond to these requests by the end of the next business day. If there is no timely response from the provider to the RFMI request, follow-up outreach calls to the provider office and group medical director or integrated delivery networks (IDN) leader will be made.

**Note:** RFMI letters will be directed to the treating provider, except for out-of-plan and/or out-of-referral circle services that require a referral. These requests will be directed to the centralized contact specified by each medical group for such requests instead of the PCP.



Once all the necessary documentation is on hand, Tufts Health Plan will make an organization determination. The member and provider will be notified verbally and in writing of the decision, according to regulations.

In the event of an adverse determination (denial), the decision may be appealed (reconsideration). Medicare does not allow for a peer-to-peer discussion of the decision in lieu of filing an appeal. Refer to the [Member Appeals and Grievances](#) chapter for additional information about the appeal process.

Refer to the [Parts C & D Enrollee Grievances, Organization/Coverage Determinations, and Appeals Guidance](#) for complete information about the organization determination requirements under Medicare. For additional guidance pertinent to Tufts Health Plan SCO, an applicable integrated plan, refer to the [Addendum to the Parts C & D Enrollee Grievances, Organization/Coverage Determinations, and Appeals Guidance for Applicable Integrated Plans](#).

### Member-Initiated Requests for Organization Determinations

If there is a disagreement between the member and provider where a provider declines to provide a service or course of treatment, in whole or part, the provider must inform the member of the right to contact Tufts Health Plan and request an organization determination. The same organization determination timeframe, notice and process requirements are in effect for all member-initiated requests as those described above.

Although it is encouraged, members are not required to discuss their request with their provider before contacting Tufts Health Plan. Members who have not discussed the requested coverage with their provider will be educated about the member's plan design and the benefit of discussing treatment options with their PCP who is familiar with their health condition.

Once a member requests an organization determination, the appropriate clinical department will fax an RFMI letter to the group medical director or IDN leader explaining the member's request, the specific information being requested to complete the review, and the deadline by which the information must be returned to Tufts Health Plan, unless sufficient information can be provided directly by the member at the time of the request. Responding by the deadline is expected so Tufts Health Plan can make a timely decision in compliance with CMS regulations. Phone calls will also be made in expedited cases.

### Benefit Exhaustions (Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO members)

Certain services, such as skilled nursing facility, inpatient rehabilitation and long-term acute care hospital may have benefit limitations for Tufts Health Plan Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO members. Members receiving these services must be notified in writing that their benefit will be exhausted as of a certain date prior to the exhaustion of their benefit.

Tufts Health Plan must be notified by the provider in advance of the benefit exhaustion so a letter can be generated and the member may be notified, in accordance with CMS requirements. In order for the member to receive timely notice, the letter will be written by Tufts Health Plan and must be delivered to the member in the facility, or to their authorized representative.

If a member is exhausting their SNF, acute inpatient rehabilitation, or long-term acute care hospital benefit, the care manager must notify the member/member's authorized representative and the facility of the impending benefit exhaustion **15 calendar days prior** to the date the coverage will end. The care manager is also required to complete and fax an [Extended Care Exhaustion of Benefit Notification Form](#) to the Precertification Operations Department at 617.673.0955. Instructions and additional information regarding this process may be found [here](#).

After receiving the form, the Precertification Operations Department uses the information to generate the Notice of Denial of Medical Coverage and Payment (NDMCP) (also known as the Integrated Denial Notice) for Tufts Health Medicare Preferred HMO members or the Coverage Decision Letter for Tufts Health Plan SCO members and then faxes it to the facility to be delivered to the member. In addition to serving as Tufts Health Plan's formal notification of benefit exhaustion to the member, the NDMCP also provides the member with their appeal rights and the process to request an organization determination if the member disagrees with the benefit exhaustion.

Refer to the [Member Appeals and Grievances](#) chapter for additional information on appeals and grievances.

### Prior Authorization Lists

For a complete listing of services requiring prior authorization, refer to the [Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO](#) and [Tufts Health Plan SCO](#) prior authorization lists.

## Notifications

Inpatient notifications are a process that makes Tufts Health Plan aware of all inpatient admissions and/or transfers to another facility. Inpatient notifications should be completed by the facility (where the member is admitted or scheduled to be admitted) or may be completed by the specialist.

Inpatient notification is required for the following services, in accordance with the notification lists for [Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO](#) and [Tufts Health Plan SCO](#):

- Inpatient acute hospital admissions, including acute rehabilitation and long-term acute care
- Inpatient BH/SUD admissions<sup>2</sup> **Note:** In addition to inpatient notification, providers are required to perform the Emergency Psychiatric Inpatient Admission (EPIA) Protocol Escalation Steps as outlined in the [EPIA Protocol 3.0](#).
- Behavioral Health Partial Hospital Programs (PHPs) for Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO
- Skilled nursing facility (SNF) admissions
- Institutional long-term care and other services provided to members while at a custodial level of care

**Note:** For behavioral health and substance use disorder admissions, a concurrent review is required after the initial notification.

### Inpatient Notification Process

Inpatient notification is a notification to Tufts Health Plan of utilization of inpatient services. Inpatient notification is required for all elective, urgent, and emergent hospital admissions, as well as acute rehabilitation and skilled nursing facility (SNF) admissions.

When an admission is reported, the inpatient notification process does the following:

- Verifies member eligibility (subject to retroactive reporting of disenrollment)
- Screens for coverage/benefit exclusions
- Identifies the facility as an in-network facility
- Verifies authorization for inpatient services outside of the Medicare Preferred HMO network.
- Identifies the facility as Medicare-approved, for services that must be performed in a Medicare-approved facility. Refer to the [Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO](#) and [Tufts Health Plan SCO](#) Medicare-approved Facilities lists for more information.

Tufts Health Plan verifies that covered services are directed by the PCP and/or the care manager. The Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO or Tufts Health Plan SCO clinical team will also be notified so they can identify and intervene in any potential transition planning and/or discharge needs for the member. When the inpatient notification process is completed, an inpatient notification reference number is assigned and is used as a reference for adjudication of claims associated with a particular episode.

### Inpatient Notification Requirements

Notification verifies that covered services are directed by the PCP and have appropriate approvals by the medical group. The care manager is also notified so they can initiate concurrent review using Medicare coverage guidelines and InterQual criteria and can identify and intervene in any potential discharge needs for the member. InterQual criteria are used for screening purposes only and are not used for medical necessity determinations.

Admitting providers and hospital admitting departments share the responsibility of notifying Tufts Health Plan in accordance with the following timelines:

- Elective admissions requests must be submitted to the Precertification Operations Department or the UM Intake Department must be reported no later than **five business days** prior to admission to submit an authorization request (**Note:** SNF and LTAC admissions are not subject to this time frame)
- Urgent or emergent admissions must be reported within two business days following admission. This includes admissions that occur after hours, on weekends, or on holidays.

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<sup>2</sup> There is a 190-day lifetime limit under Medicare for inpatient BH/SUD services provided in a private psychiatric hospital. This limit does not apply to inpatient BH/SUD services provided in a general hospital.



If a previously submitted inpatient notification of admission is cancelled, the Precertification Operations Department must be notified of that cancellation and the reschedule date, if applicable. If an admission changes from outpatient or emergency to inpatient, the provider must notify the Precertification Operations Department within one business day.

### Submission Channels

Registered providers may submit inpatient notification 24 hours a day, 7 days a week using the Tufts Health Plan secure Provider [portal](#) or New England Healthcare EDI Network (NEHEN), and will receive a notification number upon submission in most cases.

Providers may also fax a completed [Inpatient Notification Form](#) to the Precertification Operations Department at 617.972.9590 or 800.843.3553 (Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO) or 617.673.0705 (Tufts Health Plan SCO), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. No other forms will be accepted. Incomplete forms will be returned to the submitting provider for completion and resubmission. Processing of the request will be delayed until all required information is submitted.

### Confirmation of Inpatient Notification

Notifications submitted via the web will be confirmed on entry. Notifications submitted via fax are confirmed via the Provider Inquiry screen on the secure Provider [portal](#).

If a provider wants to obtain an inpatient notification number after submitting a notification request via fax, they may access this information via the Provider Inquiry screen or contact [Senior Product Provider Relations](#).

### Payment

Inpatient admissions for which an inpatient notification has been submitted according to the foregoing requirements are eligible for claim adjudication by Tufts Health Plan, as long as all other requirements have been met.

An inpatient notification number or the report of an admission does not guarantee payment. Denial of payment for late inpatient notification or lack of notification applies to the hospital claims. Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO or Tufts Health Plan SCO network providers who are denied payment for late notification or lack of notification may not bill the member. To dispute a denial or request a claim review in writing, refer to the instructions outlined in the [Provider Payment Dispute Policy](#).

### Medicare-Approved Facility Requirement

Medicare has issued several National Coverage Determinations (NCDs) providing coverage for services and procedures of a complex nature, with the stipulation that the facilities providing these services meet certain criteria. These criteria usually require, in part, that the facilities meet minimum standards to ensure the safety of beneficiaries receiving these services. Certification as a Medicare-approved facility is required for performing the following procedures. For coverage criteria, refer to the [Medicare National Coverage Determination Manual](#) (NCD manual):

- Lung volume reduction surgery (LVRS): [NCD manual, Section 240.1](#)
- Carotid artery stenting (CAS) : [NCD manual, Section 20.7](#)

**Note:** This requirement does not apply to CAS performed in a Medicare-covered Category B IDE study or post approval study.

- Ventricular assist device (VAD) destination therapy: [NCD manual, Section 20.9](#)
- Certain oncologic positron emission tomography (PET) scans in Medicare-specified studies: [NCD Manual, Section 220.6.17](#)

In addition to these procedures, there is also a long-standing requirement that all heart, heart-lung, liver, intestinal/multivisceral, kidney, and pancreas transplants be performed at a Medicare-approved facility. The transplant work-up evaluation must also be performed in a Medicare-approved transplant facility. For more information regarding transplants, refer to the [Transplant Facility Payment Policy](#).

To determine if a facility is Medicare-approved to perform a particular service, refer to the List of CMS-Approved Organ Transplant Programs available on the Quality, Certification and Oversight Reports (QCOR) [website](#).

Not all in-network providers who perform these services are Medicare-approved. Tufts Health Plan will not

compensate for services rendered at a non-Medicare-approved facility and network providers cannot hold the member liable for these services. Refer to the [Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO](#) and [Tufts Health Plan SCO](#) Medicare-approved facilities lists to identify facilities that are also contracting with Tufts Health Plan.

In addition to the Medicare-approved facility requirement, all plan inpatient notification, prior authorization, and in-network and out-of-network plan rules apply. Providers must be sure members are referred only to Medicare-approved facilities for these services. To the extent a medical group/PCP is involved in referring a member to a non-Medicare-approved facility, the provider will be financially liable for the associated costs. Because these services must be provided in a Medicare-approved facility to be covered, the costs of services in a non-Medicare-approved facility cannot be paid using Medicare funds.