

# **Clinical Policy: Transportation Policy**

**Reference Number: LA.CP.MP.514**

**Implications**

**Coding**

**Date of Last Revision: 8/22**

**Revision Log**

**See Important Reminder at the end of this policy for important regulatory and legal information.**

## **Description**

**Ambulance transportation is emergency or non-emergency medical transportation provided to Medicaid beneficiaries to and/or from a Medicaid covered service by ground or air ambulance when the beneficiary's condition is such that use of any other method of transportation is contraindicated or would make the beneficiary susceptible to injury.**

## **Policy/Criteria**

**It is the policy of Louisiana Healthcare Connections, that Emergency ambulance transportation is provided for a medical condition manifesting itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity (including severe pain) such that a prudent layperson, who possesses an average knowledge of health and medicine, could reasonably expect the absence of immediate medical attention to result in any of the following:**

- **Placing the health of the member (or, with respect to a pregnant woman, the health of the woman or her unborn child) in serious jeopardy;**
- **Serious impairment to bodily functions; or**
- **Serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part.**

**A beneficiary may also require emergency ambulance transportation if he or she is psychiatrically unmanageable or needs restraint.**

**Reimbursement to ambulance providers shall be no less than the published Medicaid fee-for service (FFS) rate in effect on the date of service, unless mutually agreed upon by the transportation broker and the transportation provider in the provider agreement.**

**Terms utilized in the published Medicaid fee schedule are defined as follows:**

- **Basic Life Support (BLS): ~~Emergency medical care administered to the EMT basic Scope of practices;~~the provision of medically necessary supplies and services by EMS practitioners who are licensed at least to the level of emergency medical technician**
- **Advanced Life Support (ALS): ~~Emergency medical care administered to at least the Level of an emergency medical technician-paramedic's scope of practice; and~~the provision of medically necessary supplies and services by EMS practitioners who are licensed at least to the level of advanced emergency technician or equivalent.**
- **Specialty Care Transport: Interfacility transportation of a critically injured or ill Beneficiary by a ground ambulance vehicle, including medically necessary supplies and services, at a level of services beyond the scope of the EMT-Paramedic.**

Reimbursement for mileage will vary depending on whether the transport is for an emergency or non-emergency event.

Reimbursement for mileage will be limited to actual mileage from point of pick up to point of delivery. Mileage can only be billed for miles traveled with the beneficiary in the ambulance.

Louisiana Healthcare Connections may not require prior review or prior authorization [VG1] for emergency ambulance transportation. This requirement includes emergency air ambulance.

- Prior approval for any emergency ambulance transportation, including mileage, is not required.

Prior approval for non-emergency transportation, including mileage, is require.

Refer to the *Hospital Services* provider manual for policies related to hospital-based ambulance services.

#### Treatment-in-Place Ambulance Services

Payment of treatment-in-place ambulance services is restricted to those identified on the Physician Directed Ambulance Treatment-in-Place Fee Schedule and edit claims for non-payable procedure codes as follows:

- If a treatment-in-place ambulance claim is billed with mileage, the entire claim document shall be denied;
- If an unpayable procedure code, that is not mileage, is billed on a treatment-in-place ambulance claim, only the line with the unpayable code will be denied;
- Claims for allowable telehealth procedure codes must be billed with procedure code G2021. The G2021 code shall be accepted, paid at \$0.00, and used by the transportation provider to identify treatment-in-place telehealth services; and
- As with all telehealth claims, providers must include POS identifier "02" and modifier "95" with their claim to identify the claim as a telehealth service. Providers must follow CPT guidance relative to the definition of a new patient versus an established patient.

#### AIR AMBULANCE

Air ambulances may be used for emergency and non-emergency ambulance transportation when medically necessary. Rotor winged (helicopters) and fixed winged emergency aircraft must be certified by the Bureau of Health Services Financing (BHSF) in order to receive

## CLINICAL POLICY

### Transportation Policy

Medicaid reimbursement. Fixed wing (FW) or rotary wing (RW) air ambulance are furnished when the medical condition is such that transport by ground ambulance, in whole or in part, is not appropriate.

All air ambulance services must comply with state laws and regulations governing the personnel certifications of the emergency medical technicians, registered nurses, respiratory care

technicians, physicians, and pilots as administered by the appropriate agency of competent jurisdiction

**I. Air ambulance (fixed wing or rotary wing) transportation is medically necessary when all the following criteria are met:**

**A. Transport by either basic or advanced life support ground ambulance would endanger the health or threaten survival of the member. Some examples of applicable conditions include, but are not limited to:**

- Intracranial bleeding requiring neurosurgical intervention;
- Cardiogenic shock;
- Burns requiring treatment in a burn center;
- Conditions requiring treatment in a Hyperbaric Oxygen Unit;
- Multiple severe injuries;
- Life-threatening trauma

**B. The location of the member needing transport meets one of the following:**

- The point of pickup is inaccessible by ground vehicle (this condition could be met in Hawaii, Alaska, and in other remote or sparsely populated areas of the continental United States);
- Great distances or other obstacles, including traffic, or travel time exceeding 30-60 minutes, are involved in getting the patient to the nearest hospital with appropriate facilities via ground transportation (examples: burn care, cardiac care, trauma care, critical care, etc.);

**C. If transportation is requested from one facility to the other, the transferring facility does not have the appropriate services and physician specialists to provide the necessary medical care (e.g., trauma unit, burn unit, cardiac care unit, or pediatric specialty services).**

If both land and air ambulance transport are necessary during the same trip, each type of provider will be reimbursed separately according to regulations for that type of provider.

**II. Air ambulance transportation is not medically necessary for any of the following:**

**A. Member is legally pronounced dead before the ambulance is called;**

## CLINICAL POLICY

### Transportation Policy

B. Transportation is provided primarily for the convenience of the member, member's family, or the physician;

C. Transportation to receive a service considered not medically necessary, even if the destination is an appropriate facility

~~Prior approval for any emergency ambulance transportation, including mileage, is not required. Prior approval for non-emergency ambulance transportation, including mileage, is required. The MCO may not require prior review or authorization for emergency ambulance transportation. This requirement includes emergency air ambulance[VG2].~~

#### Ambulance Service Exclusions

Medicaid does not cover "Ambulance 911-Non-emergency" services. If the beneficiary's medical condition does not present itself as an emergency in accordance with the criteria in this Manual, the service may be considered a non-covered service by Medicaid.

Ambulance providers shall code and bill such non-emergency services using modifiers GY, QL, or TQ to indicate that the services performed were non-covered Medicaid services.

Ambulance providers may bill beneficiaries for non-covered services only if the beneficiary was informed prior to transportation, verbally and in writing that the service would not be covered by

Medicaid and if the beneficiary then agreed to accept the responsibility for payment. The transportation provider must obtain a signed statement or form which documents that the beneficiary was verbally informed of the out-of-pocket expense.

#### NON-EMERGENCY AMBULANCE TRANSPORTATION

Non-emergency ambulance transportation (NEAT) is transportation provided by ground or air ambulance to a Medicaid beneficiary to and/or from a Medicaid covered service when no other means of transportation is available, and the beneficiary's condition is such that use of any other method of transportation is contraindicated or would make the beneficiary susceptible to injury. The nature of the trip is not an emergency, but the beneficiary requires the use of an ambulance.

NEAT must be scheduled by the beneficiary or a medical facility through the transportation broker or the ambulance provider, following the criteria below:

- If transportation is scheduled through the transportation broker, the transportation broker shall verify, prior to scheduling, beneficiary eligibility, that the originating or destination address belongs to a medical facility, and that a completed CAT form for the date of service is obtained, reviewed, and accepted by the transportation broker prior to transport. Once the trip has been dispatched to an ambulance provider and completed, the ambulance provider shall be reimbursed upon submission of the clean claim for the transport; and*

## CLINICAL POLICY

### Transportation Policy

- If transportation is scheduled through the ambulance provider, the ambulance provider must verify beneficiary eligibility, that the originating or destination address belongs to a medical facility, and that a completed CAT form for the date of service is obtained, reviewed, and accepted by the ambulance provider prior to reimbursement. The transportation broker shall reimburse the ambulance provider only if a completed CAT form is submitted with the clean claim or is on file with the transportation broker prior to reimbursement.

#### Out-of-State Transportation

The member may seek medically necessary services in another state when it is the nearest option available. All out-of-state NEAT must be prior approved by the transportation broker. The transportation broker may approve transportation to out-of-state medical care only if the beneficiary has been granted approval to receive medical treatment out of state.

#### Background

##### Emergency Ambulance Transportation

Emergency Transportation is used to expeditiously transport critically ill patients during life-threatening emergencies when either great distances or other obstacles such as heavy traffic, preclude such rapid delivery to the nearest appropriate facility. Transport by air ambulance may also be necessary when accessibility by a ground ambulance is not possible.

Air ambulance transportation is widely regarded as having a beneficial impact on improving the chances of survival and recovery for trauma victims and other critical patients, particularly in rural areas that lack readily accessible advanced-care facilities such as trauma or burn centers.

#### Coding Implications

This clinical policy references Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®). CPT® is a registered trademark of the American Medical Association. All CPT codes and descriptions are copyrighted 2020, American Medical Association. All rights reserved. CPT codes and CPT descriptions are from the current manuals and those included herein are not intended to be all-inclusive and are included for informational purposes only. Codes referenced in this clinical policy are for informational purposes only and may not support medical necessity. Inclusion or exclusion of any codes does not guarantee coverage. Providers should reference the most up-to-date sources of professional coding guidance prior to the submission of claims for reimbursement of covered services.

Table 1: Emergency Ground Ambulance HCPCS Codes

<u>CPT® Codes</u>	<u>Description</u>
<u>A0382</u>	<u>Basic Life Support, Routine Disposable Supplies</u>
<u>A0394</u>	<u>ALS Special Service Disposable Supplies IV drug therapy</u>
<u>A0398</u>	<u>ALS Routine Disposable Supplies</u>
<u>A0422</u>	<u>Ambulance (ALS or BLS) Oxygenated Oxygen Supplies, Life Sustaining</u>

## CLINICAL POLICY

### Transportation Policy

<u>CPT® Codes</u>	<u>Description</u>
<u>A0425</u>	<u>Ground Mileage</u>
<u>A0427</u>	<u>ALS Emergency Transport, <b>level 1</b></u>
<u>A0429</u>	<u>BLS Emergency Transport</u>
<u>A0433</u>	<u>ALS 2</u>
<u>A0434</u>	<u>Specialty Care Transport</u>

**Table 2: Emergency Air HCPCS Codes**

<u>CPT® Codes</u>	<u>Description</u>
<u>A0430</u>	<u>Fixed wing air</u>
<u>A0431</u>	<u>Rotary wing air</u>
<u>A0435</u>	<u>Air Mileage; fixed wing</u>
<u>A0436</u>	<u>Air Mileage; rotary wing</u>

<u>Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals</u>	<u>Revision Date</u>	<u>Approval Date</u>
<u>Original approval date</u>	<u>8/22</u>	

### References

1. Louisiana Medicaid Managed Care Organization (MCO) Manual. Medical Transportation section: page 52-75. Updated 06/30/2022.
2. Louisiana Medicaid Provider Manual; Medical Transportation. Issue date: January 11, 2021. Ambulance section 10.7-10.10.

### Important Reminder

This clinical policy has been developed by appropriately experienced and licensed health care professionals based on a review and consideration of currently available generally accepted standards of medical practice; peer-reviewed medical literature; government agency/program approval status; evidence-based guidelines and positions of leading national health professional organizations; views of physicians practicing in relevant clinical areas affected by this clinical policy; and other available clinical information. LHCC makes no representations and accepts no

liability with respect to the content of any external information used or relied upon in developing this clinical policy. This clinical policy is consistent with standards of medical practice current at the time that this clinical policy was approved.

The purpose of this clinical policy is to provide a guide to medical necessity, which is a component of the guidelines used to assist in making coverage decisions and administering benefits. It does not constitute a contract or guarantee regarding payment or results.

## CLINICAL POLICY

### Transportation Policy

Coverage decisions and the administration of benefits are subject to all terms, conditions, exclusions and limitations of the coverage documents (e.g., evidence of coverage, certificate of coverage, policy, contract of insurance, etc.), as well as to state and federal requirements and applicable LHCC administrative policies and procedures.

This clinical policy is effective as of the date determined by LHCC. The date of posting may not be the effective date of this clinical policy. This clinical policy may be subject to applicable legal and regulatory requirements relating to provider notification. If there is a discrepancy between the effective date of this clinical policy and any applicable legal or regulatory requirement, the requirements of law and regulation shall govern. LHCC retains the right to change, amend or withdraw this clinical policy, and additional clinical policies may be developed and adopted as needed, at any time.

This clinical policy does not constitute medical advice, medical treatment or medical care. It is not intended to dictate to providers how to practice medicine. Providers are expected to exercise professional medical judgment in providing the most appropriate care, and are solely responsible for the medical advice and treatment of members. This clinical policy is not intended to recommend treatment for members. Members should consult with their treating physician in connection with diagnosis and treatment decisions.

Providers referred to in this clinical policy are independent contractors who exercise independent judgment and over whom LHCC has no control or right of control. Providers are not agents or employees of LHCC.

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