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Medicare Advantage Policy Manual

Policy ID: M-MED15

Whole Body Hyperthermia

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IMPORTANT REMINDER

The Medicare Advantage Medical Policy manual is not intended to override the member Evidence of Coverage (EOC), which defines the insured's benefits, nor is it intended to dictate how providers are to practice medicine. Physicians and other health care providers are expected to exercise their medical judgment in providing the most appropriate care for the individual member, including care that may be both medically reasonable and necessary.

The Medicare Advantage medical policies are designed to provide guidance regarding the decision-making process for the coverage or non-coverage of services or procedures in accordance with the member EOC and Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) policies and manuals, along with general CMS rules and regulations. In the event of a conflict, applicable CMS policy or EOC language will take precedence over the Medicare Advantage Medical Policy. In the absence of a specific CMS coverage determination for a requested service, item or procedure, the health plan may apply CMS regulations, as well as their Medical Policy Manual or other applicable utilization management vendor criteria developed with an objective, evidence-based process using scientific evidence, current generally accepted standards of medical practice, and authoritative clinical practice guidelines.

Some services or items may appear to be medically indicated for an individual, but may be a direct exclusion of Medicare or the member's benefit plan. Medicare and member EOCs exclude from coverage, among other things, services or procedures considered to be investigational (experimental) or cosmetic, as well as services or items considered not medically reasonable and necessary under Title XVIII of the Social Security Act, §1862(a)(1)(A). In some cases, providers may bill members for these non-covered services or procedures. Providers are encouraged to inform members in advance when they may be financially responsible for the cost of non-covered or excluded services. Members, their appointed representative, or a treating provider can request coverage of a service or item by submitting a pre-service organization determination prior to services being rendered.

DESCRIPTION

Hyperthermia can be administered using local and whole body techniques. With whole body hyperthermia, the patient's body temperature is increased by packing the patient in heated blankets or by placing the patient in a cylinder constructed of copper tubing with circulating hot water. The elevated body temperature is maintained for a period of several hours while essential body functions are monitored. This modality has been termed "systemic thermotherapy" or "whole body hyperthermia." Both local and whole body techniques have been used for the treatment of malignancies.

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE POLICY CRITERIA

Note: This Medicare Advantage medical policy addresses **whole body** hyperthermia. It does not address **local** hyperthermia, which may be considered medically necessary in some situations, as outlined by the Medicare national coverage determination (NCD) for *Hyperthermia for Treatment of Cancer* (110.1).^[1]

CMS Coverage Manuals*	None
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National Coverage Determinations (NCDs)*	None
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Noridian Healthcare Solutions (Noridian) Local Coverage Determinations (LCDs) and Articles (LCAs)*	None
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Medical Policy Manual	<i>While Medicare coverage guidance is available for local hyperthermia, Medicare coverage guidance is not available for whole body hyperthermia. Therefore, the health plan's medical policy is applicable.</i>
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Whole Body Hyperthermia, Medicine, [Policy No. 15](#) (see *"NOTE" below*)

NOTE: If a procedure or device lacks scientific evidence regarding safety and efficacy because it is investigational or experimental, the service is noncovered as not reasonable and necessary to treat illness or injury. ([Medicare IOM Pub. No. 100-04, Ch. 23, §30 A](#)). According to Title XVIII of the Social Security Act, §1862(a)(1)(A), only medically reasonable and necessary services are covered by Medicare. In the absence of a NCD, LCD, or other coverage guideline, CMS guidelines allow a Medicare Advantage Organization (MAO) to make coverage determinations, applying an **objective, evidence-based process, based on authoritative evidence**. ([Medicare IOM Pub. No. 100-16, Ch. 4, §90.5](#)). The Medicare Advantage Medical Policy - Medicine Policy No. M-149 - provides further details regarding the plan's evidence-assessment process (see Cross References).

POLICY GUIDELINES

Note, the fact a new service or procedure has been issued a CPT/HCPCS code or is FDA approved for a specific indication does not, in itself, make the procedure medically reasonable and necessary. The FDA determines safety and effectiveness of a device or drug, but does not establish medical necessity. While Medicare may adopt FDA determinations regarding safety and effectiveness, Medicare or Medicare contractors evaluate whether or not the drug or device is reasonable and necessary for the Medicare population under §1862(a)(1)(A).

CROSS REFERENCES

[Investigational \(Experimental\) Services, New and Emerging Medical Technologies and Procedures, and Other Non-Covered Services](#), Medicine, Policy No. M-149

REFERENCES

1. Hyperthermia for Treatment of Cancer (110.1) (*This NCD can be accessed directly from the [Medicare Coverage Database](#) website*)

CODING

Codes	Number	Description
CPT	77600	Hyperthermia, externally generated; superficial (ie, heating to a depth of 4 cm or less)
	77605	Hyperthermia, externally generated; deep (ie, heating to depths greater than 4 cm)
	77610	Hyperthermia generated by interstitial probe(s); 5 or fewer interstitial applicators
	77615	Hyperthermia generated by interstitial probe(s); more than 5 interstitial applicators
	77620	Hyperthermia generated by intracavitary probe(s)
HCPCS	None	

***IMPORTANT NOTE:** Medicare Advantage medical policies use the most current Medicare references available at the time the policy was developed. Links to Medicare references will take viewers to external websites outside of the health plan's web control as these sites are not maintained by the health plan.