

# PROVIDER BULLETIN

## PROVIDER INFORMATION



August 3, 2020

### **CMS Decision on Acupuncture for Chronic Low Back Pain**

On January 21, 2020, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a decision memo (CAG-00452N) communicating future coverage of acupuncture for chronic low back pain, including a draft national coverage determination (NCD) outlining the criteria for coverage. Prior to the decision memo, CMS considered acupuncture to be not reasonable and necessary for the treatment of any condition. CMS has since published NCD 30.3.3 and acupuncture is covered for chronic low back pain when criteria are met, effective for dates of service on and after January 21, 2020.

### **Products Impacted**

This information only applies to Medicare Advantage and Platinum Blue subscribers.

### **Eligible codes**

Acupuncture codes (97810, 97811, 97813, 97814, 20560 and 20561) that were previously considered non-covered are now eligible for chronic low back pain when criteria are met. No more than 20 acupuncture treatments for chronic low back pain may be administered annually in accordance with NCD 30.3.3. Providers are required to follow the criteria in NCD 30.3.3. No prior authorization is required.

### **Claims filing**

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota and Blue Plus (Blue Cross) continues to work on updating systems to process claims in accordance with NCD 30.3.3. Once updates are complete, impacted claims will be processed for Platinum Blue and Medicare Advantage retroactive to January 21, 2020. Claims for Medicare Advantage and Platinum Blue members should be filed to Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota (Blue Cross).

### **Eligible providers**

Must be under supervision of a licensed Physician; Independent Acupuncturists are not covered. Physicians *as defined in 1861(r)(1) of the Social Security Act (the Act) may furnish acupuncture in accordance with applicable state requirements.*

*Physician assistants (PAs), nurse practitioners (NPs)/clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) (as identified in 1861(aa)(5) of the Act), and auxiliary personnel may furnish acupuncture if they meet all applicable state requirements and have:*

- a masters or doctoral level degree in acupuncture or Oriental Medicine from a school accredited by the Accreditation Commission on Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM); and,
- a current, full, active, and unrestricted license to practice acupuncture in a State, Territory, or Commonwealth (i.e. Puerto Rico) of the United States, or District of Columbia.
- Auxiliary personnel furnishing acupuncture must be under the appropriate level of supervision of a physician, PA, or NP/CNS required by our regulations at 42 CFR §§ 410.26 and 410.27.

**Questions?** If you have questions, please contact provider services at **(651) 662-5200** or **1-800-262-0820**.

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