

PROVIDER BULLETIN

Provider information



April 15, 2013

Anesthesia Services for Gastrointestinal Endoscopic Procedures

To help ensure that subscribers receive the appropriate level of care when undergoing gastrointestinal endoscopic procedures, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota (Blue Cross) is implementing payment policy for anesthesia services associated with **non-emergent routine** upper and lower gastrointestinal endoscopic procedures, effective June 5, 2013. These payment rules operationalize the medical necessity criteria in Blue Cross' existing medical policy (policy number II-93, effective date March 11, 2013).

Intravenous sedation ("conscious sedation") ordered and administered by the physician performing the gastrointestinal endoscopic procedure is considered medically necessary. Reimbursement for the service and supplies for such intravenous sedation is included in the payment for the endoscopic procedure.

The medical policy document also lists clinical situations in which other anesthesia services, including general and monitored anesthesia care (MAC), may be considered medically necessary. Notably, Blue Cross would consider those anesthesia services medically necessary for patients at increased risk of complications due to severe comorbidity, according to the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) physical status score of 3 or greater. Other clinical situations in which Blue Cross would consider anesthesia services for endoscopy to be medically necessary are listed in the medical policy document.

For situations not listed in the medical policy document, which would be expected to encompass most non-emergent routine procedures, Blue Cross would consider anesthesia services (other than intravenous sedation) during gastrointestinal endoscopy to be not medically necessary.

Medical policy II-93

To access medical policy II-93, Anesthesia Services for Gastrointestinal Endoscopic Procedures, go to **providers.bluecrossmn.com** and follow these steps:

1. Select "Medical policy" (under Tools and Resources)
2. Read and accept the Blue Cross medical policy statement
3. Select "View All Active Policies"
4. Select "Anesthesia Services for Gastrointestinal Endoscopic Procedures" from the alphabetical list of topics

Submitting claims

If a patient has an ASA physical status score of 3 or greater, and an anesthesia claim is submitted with appropriate modifiers indicating this status, it will be considered medically necessary and covered.

If a patient has a clinical situation that may meet medical necessity criteria for anesthesia services during gastrointestinal endoscopy (according to the medical policy document), you may choose to obtain pre-certification/pre-authorization for coverage of the anesthesia services.

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Pre-certification/pre-authorization

Providers can obtain pre-certification/pre-authorization by completing the Pre-Authorization Request form. To access the form, go to **providers.bluecrossmn.com** and select “Forms & publications” then “forms: precertification and preauthorization.” Fax the completed form along with evidence of medical necessity to **(651) 662-2810**. Blue Cross will use criteria set forth in Blue Cross medical policy II-93 in conducting a medical necessity review.

Failure to provide evidence of medical necessity may result in claim denials as provider liability.

Review requirements

Providers have a contractual obligation as noted in Chapter 4 of the online Blue Cross Provider Policy and Procedure Manual to adhere to care management programs.

Questions?

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