

## **SECTION [XXI]**

*{Drafting Note: Insert the appropriate section number, following the order of provisions in the Table of Contents.}*

### **Utilization Review**

#### **A. Utilization Review.**

We review health services to determine whether the services are or were Medically Necessary or experimental or investigational ("Medically Necessary"). This process is called Utilization Review. Utilization Review includes all review activities, whether they take place prior to the service being performed (Preauthorization); when the service is being performed (concurrent); or after the service is performed (retrospective). If You have any questions about the Utilization Review process, please call [XXX or, for mental health and substance use disorder services, XXX; the number on Your ID card]. The toll-free telephone number is available at least 40 hours a week with an after-hours answering machine.

*{Drafting Note: Insert the bracketed sentence regarding contact information for a behavioral health organization as applicable.}*

Initial determinations that services are not Medically Necessary will be made by: 1) licensed Physicians; or 2) licensed, certified, registered or credentialed Health Care Professionals who are in the same profession and same or similar specialty as the Provider who typically manages Your medical condition or disease or provides the health care service under review; or 3) for mental health or substance use disorder treatment, licensed Physicians or licensed, certified, registered or credentialed Health Care Professionals who specialize in behavioral health and have experience in the delivery of mental health or substance use disorder courses of treatment. Appeal determinations that services are not Medically Necessary will be made by: 1) licensed Physicians who are board certified or board eligible in the same or similar specialty as the Provider who typically manages Your medical condition or disease or provides the health care service under review ; or 2) licensed, certified, registered or credentialed Health Care Professionals who are in the same profession and same or similar specialty as the Provider who typically manages Your medical condition or disease or provides the health care service under review; or 3) for mental health or substance use disorder treatment, licensed Physicians or licensed, certified, registered or credentialed Health Care Professionals who specialize in behavioral health and have experience in the delivery of mental health or substance use disorder courses of treatment. We do not compensate or provide financial incentives to Our employees or reviewers for determining that services are not Medically Necessary.

We have developed guidelines and protocols to assist Us in this process. We will use evidence-based and peer reviewed clinical review criteria tools that are appropriate to the age of the patient and designated by OASAS for substance use disorder treatment or approved for use by OMH for mental health treatment. Specific guidelines and protocols are available for Your review upon request. For more information, call [XXX;

the number on Your ID card] [or visit Our website [at XXX]].

You may ask that We send You electronic notification of a Utilization Review determination instead of notice in writing or by telephone. You must tell Us in advance if You want to receive electronic notifications. To opt into electronic notifications, call [XXX; the number on Your ID card] [or visit Our website [at XXX]]. You can opt out of electronic notifications at any time.

## **B. Preauthorization Reviews.**

1. **Non-Urgent Preauthorization Reviews.** If We have all the information necessary to make a determination regarding a Preauthorization review, We will make a determination and provide notice to You (or Your designee) and Your Provider, by telephone and in writing, within three (3) business days of receipt of the request.

If We need additional information, We will request it within three (3) business days. You or Your Provider will then have 45 calendar days to submit the information. If We receive the requested information within 45 days, We will make a determination and provide notice to You (or Your designee) and Your Provider, by telephone and in writing, within three (3) business days of Our receipt of the information. If all necessary information is not received within 45 days, We will make a determination within 15 calendar days of the earlier of the receipt of part of the requested information or the end of the 45-day period.

2. **Urgent Preauthorization Reviews.** With respect to urgent Preauthorization requests, if We have all information necessary to make a determination, We will make a determination and provide notice to You (or Your designee) and Your Provider, by telephone, within 72 hours of receipt of the request. Written notice will be provided within three (3) business days of receipt of the request. If We need additional information, We will request it within 24 hours. You or Your Provider will then have 48 hours to submit the information. We will make a determination and provide notice to You (or Your designee) and Your Provider by telephone [and in writing] within 48 hours of the earlier of Our receipt of the information or the end of the 48 hour period. [Written notification will be provided within the earlier of three (3) business days of Our receipt of the information or three (3) calendar days after the verbal notification.]

*{Drafting Note: If plans do not provide the written notification within 48 hours, delete the “and in writing” and insert the bracketed sentence beginning “Written notification will be provided the earlier of”.}*

3. **Court Ordered Treatment.** With respect to requests for mental health and/or substance use disorder services that have not yet been provided, if You (or Your designee) certify, in a format prescribed by the Superintendent of Financial Services, that You will be appearing, or have appeared, before a court of competent jurisdiction and may be subject to a court order requiring such

services, We will make a determination and provide notice to You (or Your designee) and Your Provider by telephone within 72 hours of receipt of the request. Written notification will be provided within three (3) business days of Our receipt of the request. Where feasible, the telephonic and written notification will also be provided to the court.

4. **[Inpatient Rehabilitation Services Reviews.** After receiving a Preauthorization request for coverage of inpatient rehabilitation services following an inpatient Hospital admission provided by a Hospital or skilled nursing facility, We will make a determination and provide notice to You (or Your designee) and Your Provider, by telephone and in writing, within one (1) business day of receipt of the necessary information.]  
*{Drafting Note: Include the paragraph above if preauthorization for inpatient rehabilitation services following a hospital discharge is required.}*

**[5.] Crisis Stabilization Centers.** Services provided at participating crisis stabilization centers licensed under New York Mental Hygiene Law section 36.01, and, in other states, those which are accredited by the joint commission as alcoholism or chemical dependence substance use treatment programs and are similarly licensed, certified or otherwise authorized in the state where the Facility is located, are not subject to Preauthorization. We may review the treatment provided by crisis stabilization centers retrospectively to determine whether it was Medically Necessary, and We will use clinical review tools designated by OASAS or approved by OMH. If any treatment at a participating crisis stabilization center is denied as not Medically Necessary, You are only responsible for any Cost-Sharing that would otherwise apply to Your treatment.

**[6.] Preauthorization for Rabies Treatment.** Post-exposure rabies treatment authorized by a county health authority is sufficient to be considered Preauthorized by Us.

## **C. Concurrent Reviews.**

1. **Non-Urgent Concurrent Reviews.** Utilization Review decisions for services during the course of care (concurrent reviews) will be made, and notice provided to You (or Your designee) [and Your Provider], by telephone and in writing, within one (1) business day of receipt of all necessary information. If We need additional information, We will request it within one (1) business day. You or Your Provider will then have 45 calendar days to submit the information. We will make a determination and provide notice to You (or Your designee) [and Your Provider], by telephone and in writing, within one (1) business day of Our receipt of the information or, if We do not receive the information, within the earlier of [15 calendar days; one (1) business day] of the receipt of part of the requested information or 15 calendar days of the end of the 45-day period.  
*{Drafting Note: Plans may use 15 calendar days or one business day.}*

2. **Urgent Concurrent Reviews.** For concurrent reviews that involve an extension of Urgent Care, if the request for coverage is made at least 24 hours prior to the expiration of a previously approved treatment, We will make a determination and provide notice to You (or Your designee) [and Your Provider] by telephone within 24 hours of receipt of the request. Written notice will be provided within one (1) business day of receipt of the request.

If the request for coverage is not made at least 24 hours prior to the expiration of a previously approved treatment and We have all the information necessary to make a determination, We will make a determination and provide written notice to You (or Your designee) [and Your Provider] within the earlier of 72 hours or one (1) business day of receipt of the request. If We need additional information, We will request it within 24 hours. You or Your Provider will then have 48 hours to submit the information. We will make a determination and provide written notice to You (or Your designee) [and Your Provider] within the earlier of one (1) business day or 48 hours of Our receipt of the information or, if we do not receive the information, within 48 hours of the end of the 48-hour period.

3. **[Home Health Care Reviews.** After receiving a request for coverage of home care services following an inpatient Hospital admission, We will make a determination and provide notice to You (or Your designee) [and Your Provider], by telephone and in writing, within one (1) business day of receipt of the necessary information. If the day following the request falls on a weekend or holiday, We will make a determination and provide notice to You (or Your designee) [and Your Provider] within [72] hours of receipt of the necessary information. When We receive a request for home care services and all necessary information prior to Your discharge from an inpatient hospital admission, We will not deny coverage for home care services while Our decision on the request is pending.]

*{Drafting Note: Include the paragraph above if authorization for home care following a hospital discharge is required.}*

- [4.] **Inpatient Substance Use Disorder Treatment Reviews.** If a request for inpatient substance use disorder treatment is submitted to Us at least 24 hours prior to discharge from an inpatient substance use disorder treatment admission, We will make a determination within 24 hours of receipt of the request and We will provide coverage for the inpatient substance use disorder treatment while Our determination is pending.

- [5.] **Inpatient Substance Use Disorder Treatment at Participating Facilities Licensed, Certified or Otherwise Authorized by OASAS-** Inpatient substance use disorder treatment at a participating Facility that is licensed, certified or otherwise authorized by OASAS is not subject to Preauthorization. Coverage will not be subject to concurrent review for the first 28 days of the inpatient admission if the OASAS-certified Facility notifies Us of both the admission and the initial treatment plan within two (2) business days of the admission. After the first 28

days of the inpatient admission, We may review the entire stay to determine whether it is Medically Necessary and We will use the clinical review tool designated by OASAS. If any portion of the stay is denied as not Medically Necessary, You are only responsible for the in-network Cost-Sharing that would otherwise apply to Your inpatient admission.

**[6.] Outpatient Substance Use Disorder Treatment at Participating OASAS-Certified Facilities.** Coverage for outpatient, intensive outpatient, outpatient rehabilitation and opioid treatment at a participating OASAS-certified Facility is not subject to Preauthorization. Coverage will not be subject to concurrent review for the first four (4) weeks of continuous treatment, not to exceed 28 visits, if the OASAS-certified Facility notifies Us of both the start of treatment and the initial treatment plan within two (2) business days. After the first four (4) weeks of continuous treatment, not to exceed 28 visits, We may review the entire outpatient treatment to determine whether it is Medically Necessary and We will use clinical review tools designated by OASAS. If any portion of the outpatient treatment is denied as not Medically Necessary, You are only responsible for the in-network Cost-Sharing that would otherwise apply to Your outpatient treatment.

#### **D. Retrospective Reviews.**

If We have all information necessary to make a determination regarding a retrospective claim, We will make a determination and notify You [and Your Provider] within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the request. If We need additional information, We will request it within 30 calendar days. You or Your Provider will then have 45 calendar days to provide the information. We will make a determination and provide notice to You [and Your Provider] in writing within 15 calendar days of the earlier of Our receipt of the information or the end of the 45-day period.

Once We have all the information to make a decision, Our failure to make a Utilization Review determination within the applicable time frames set forth above will be deemed an adverse determination subject to an internal Appeal.

#### **E. Retrospective Review of Preauthorized Services.**

We may only reverse a preauthorized treatment, service or procedure on retrospective review when:

- The relevant medical information presented to Us upon retrospective review is materially different from the information presented during the Preauthorization review;
- The relevant medical information presented to Us upon retrospective review existed at the time of the Preauthorization but was withheld or not made available to Us;
- We were not aware of the existence of such information at the time of the Preauthorization review; and
- Had We been aware of such information, the treatment, service or procedure being requested would not have been authorized. The determination is made

using the same specific standards, criteria or procedures as used during the Preauthorization review.

## **F. Step Therapy Override Determinations.**

You, Your designee, or Your Health Care Professional may request a step therapy protocol override determination for Coverage of a Prescription Drug selected by Your Health Care Professional. When conducting Utilization Review for a step therapy protocol override determination, We will use recognized evidence-based and peer reviewed clinical review criteria that is appropriate for You and Your medical condition.

**1. Supporting Rationale and Documentation.** A step therapy protocol override determination request should include supporting rationale and documentation from a Health Care Professional, demonstrating that:

- The required Prescription Drug is contraindicated or will likely cause an adverse reaction or physical or mental harm to You;
- The required Prescription Drug is expected to be ineffective based on Your known clinical history, condition, and Prescription Drug regimen;
- You have tried the required Prescription Drug while covered by Us or under Your previous health insurance coverage, or another Prescription Drug in the same pharmacologic class or with the same mechanism of action, and that Prescription Drug was discontinued due to lack of efficacy or effectiveness, diminished effect, or an adverse event;
- You are stable on a Prescription Drug selected by Your Health Care Professional for Your medical condition, provided this does not prevent Us from requiring You to try an AB-rated generic equivalent; or
- The required Prescription Drug is not in Your best interest because it will likely cause a significant barrier to Your adherence to or compliance with Your plan of care, will likely worsen a comorbid condition, or will likely decrease Your ability to achieve or maintain reasonable functional ability in performing daily activities.

**2. Standard Review.** We will make a step therapy protocol override determination and provide notification to You (or Your designee) and where appropriate, Your Health Care Professional, within 72 hours of receipt of the supporting rationale and documentation.

**3. Expedited Review.** If You have a medical condition that places Your health in serious jeopardy without the Prescription Drug prescribed by Your Health Care Professional, We will make a step therapy protocol override determination within 24 hours of receipt of the supporting rationale and documentation.

If the required supporting rationale and documentation are not submitted with a step therapy protocol override determination request, We will request the information within 72 hours for Preauthorization and retrospective reviews, the lesser of 72 hours or one (1) business day for concurrent reviews, and 24 hours for expedited reviews. You or Your Health Care Professional will have 45 calendar days to submit the information for

Preauthorization, concurrent and retrospective reviews, and 48 hours for expedited reviews. For Preauthorization reviews, We will make a determination and provide notification to You (or Your designee) and Your Health Care Professional within the earlier of 72 hours of Our receipt of the information or 15 calendar days of the end of the 45-day period if the information is not received. For concurrent reviews, We will make a determination and provide notification to You (or Your designee) [and Your Health Care Professional] within the earlier of 72 hours or one (1) business day of Our receipt of the information or 15 calendar days of the end of the 45-day period if the information is not received. For retrospective reviews, We will make a determination and provide notification to You (or Your designee) [and Your Health Care Professional] within the earlier of 72 hours of Our receipt of the information or 15 calendar days of the end of the 45-day period if the information is not received. For expedited reviews, We will make a determination and provide notification to You (or Your designee) and Your Health Care Professional within the earlier of 24 hours of Our receipt of the information or 48 hours of the end of the 48-hour period if the information is not received.

If We do not make a determination within 72 hours (or 24 hours for expedited reviews) of receipt of the supporting rationale and documentation, the step therapy protocol override request will be approved.

If We determine that the step therapy protocol should be overridden, We will authorize immediate coverage for the Prescription Drug prescribed by Your treating Health Care Professional. An adverse step therapy override determination is eligible for an Appeal.]

#### **G. Reconsideration.**

If We did not attempt to consult with Your Provider who recommended the Covered Service before making an adverse determination, the Provider may request reconsideration by the same clinical peer reviewer who made the adverse determination or a designated clinical peer reviewer if the original clinical peer reviewer is unavailable. For Preauthorization and concurrent reviews, the reconsideration will take place within one (1) business day of the request for reconsideration. If the adverse determination is upheld, a notice of adverse determination will be given to You and Your Provider, by telephone and in writing.

#### **H. Utilization Review Internal Appeals.**

You, Your designee, and, in retrospective review cases, Your Provider, may request an internal Appeal of an adverse determination, either by phone[, in person,] or in writing.

You have up to 180 calendar days after You receive notice of the adverse determination to file an Appeal. We will acknowledge Your request for an internal Appeal within 15 calendar days of receipt. This acknowledgment will [include the name, address, and phone number of the person handling Your Appeal and,] if necessary, inform You of any additional information needed before a decision can be made. . The Appeal will be decided by a clinical peer reviewer who is not subordinate to the clinical peer reviewer who made the initial adverse determination and who is (1) a Physician or (2) a Health Care Professional in the same or similar specialty as the Provider who typically

manages the disease or condition at issue.

*{Drafting Note: The bracketed language above is optional.}*

1. **{Out-of-Network Service Denial.}** You also have the right to Appeal the denial of a Preauthorization request for an out-of-network health service when We determine that the out-of-network health service is not materially different from an available in-network health service. A denial of an out-of-network health service is a service provided by a Non-Participating Provider, but only when the service is not available from a Participating Provider. For a Utilization Review Appeal of denial of an out-of-network health service, You or Your designee must submit:
  - A written statement from Your attending Physician, who must be a licensed, board-certified or board-eligible Physician qualified to practice in the specialty area of practice appropriate to treat Your condition, that the requested out-of-network health service is materially different from the alternate health service available from a Participating Provider that We approved to treat Your condition; and
  - Two (2) documents from the available medical and scientific evidence that the out-of-network service: 1) is likely to be more clinically beneficial to You than the alternate in-network service; and 2) that the adverse risk of the out-of-network service would likely not be substantially increased over the in-network health service.
2. **Out-of-Network [Referral; Authorization] Denial.** You also have the right to Appeal the denial of a request for [a Referral; an authorization] to a Non-Participating Provider when We determine that We have a Participating Provider with the appropriate training and experience to meet Your particular health care needs who is able to provide the requested health care service. For a Utilization Review Appeal of an out-of-network [Referral; authorization] denial, You or Your designee must submit a written statement from Your attending Physician, who must be a licensed, board-certified or board-eligible Physician qualified to practice in the specialty area of practice appropriate to treat Your condition:
  - That the Participating Provider recommended by Us does not have the appropriate training and experience to meet Your particular health care needs for the health care service; and
  - Recommending a Non-Participating Provider with the appropriate training and experience to meet Your particular health care needs who is able to provide the requested health care service.]

#### **I. [First Level; Standard] Appeal.**

1. **Preauthorization Appeal.** If Your Appeal relates to a Preauthorization request, We will decide the Appeal within 30 calendar days of receipt of the Appeal request. Written notice of the determination will be provided to You (or Your designee), and where appropriate, Your Provider, within two (2) business days after the determination is made, but no later than 30 calendar days after receipt of the Appeal request.



2. **Retrospective Appeal.** If Your Appeal relates to a retrospective claim, We will decide the Appeal within the earlier of 30 calendar days of receipt of the information necessary to conduct the Appeal or 60 days of receipt of the Appeal. Written notice of the determination will be provided to You (or Your designee), and where appropriate, Your Provider, within two (2) business days after the determination is made, but no later than 60 calendar days after receipt of the Appeal request.
3. **Expedited Appeal.** An Appeal of a review of continued or extended health care services, additional services rendered in the course of continued treatment, home health care services following discharge from an inpatient Hospital admission, services in which a Provider requests an immediate review, mental health and/or substance use disorder services that may be subject to a court order, or any other urgent matter will be handled on an expedited basis. An expedited Appeal is not available for retrospective reviews. For an expedited Appeal, Your Provider will have reasonable access to the clinical peer reviewer assigned to the Appeal within one (1) business day of receipt of the request for an Appeal. Your Provider and a clinical peer reviewer may exchange information by telephone or fax. An expedited Appeal will be determined within the earlier of 72 hours of receipt of the Appeal or two (2) business days of receipt of the information necessary to conduct the Appeal. Written notice of the determination will be provided to You (or Your designee) within 24 hours after the determination is made, but no later than 72 hours after receipt of the Appeal request.

Our failure to render a determination of Your Appeal within 60 calendar days of receipt of the necessary information for a standard Appeal or within two (2) business days of receipt of the necessary information for an expedited Appeal will be deemed a reversal of the initial adverse determination.

4. **Substance Use Appeal.** If We deny a request for inpatient substance use disorder treatment that was submitted at least 24 hours prior to discharge from an inpatient admission, and You or your Provider file an expedited internal Appeal of Our adverse determination, We will decide the Appeal within 24 hours of receipt of the Appeal request. If You or Your Provider file the expedited internal Appeal and an expedited external appeal within 24 hours of receipt of Our adverse determination, We will also provide coverage for the inpatient substance use disorder treatment while a determination on the internal Appeal and external appeal is pending.

**[J.] Full and Fair Review of an Appeal.**

We will provide You, free of charge, with any new or additional evidence considered, relied upon, or generated by Us or any new or additional rationale in connection with Your Appeal. The evidence or rationale will be provided as soon as possible and sufficiently in advance of the date on which the notice of final adverse determination is required to be provided to give You a reasonable opportunity to respond prior to that date.

**[K.] Appeal Assistance.**

If You need Assistance filing an Appeal, You may contact the state independent Consumer Assistance Program at:

Community Health Advocates

633 Third Avenue, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor

New York, NY 10017

Or call toll free: 1-888-614-5400, or e-mail [cha@cssny.org](mailto:cha@cssny.org)

Website: [www.communityhealthadvocates.org](http://www.communityhealthadvocates.org)

*{Drafting Note: For use with insurance products.}*

If You need assistance filing a Grievance, You may also contact the state independent Consumer Assistance Program at:

Community Health Advocates

633 Third Avenue, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor

New York, NY 10017

Or call toll free: 1-888-614-5400, or e-mail [cha@cssny.org](mailto:cha@cssny.org)

Website: [www.communityhealthadvocates.org](http://www.communityhealthadvocates.org)