

# Clinical Policy: Transplant Service Documentation Requirements

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[Coding Implications](#)

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## Description

The pre-transplant evaluation provides the opportunity to identify conditions that can affect an individual's ability to have a successful transplant. Identifying those who may benefit from a transplant involves many factors; overall health and disease stage are all extremely important considerations in the evaluation process. The pre-transplant evaluation phase includes covered diagnostic tests and consultations performed by a provider that are necessary to assess and evaluate transplant candidacy for acceptance into a transplant program.

The determination of medical necessity for transplant procedures is based on a combination of clinical data and the presence of indicators that would complicate surgery and affect postoperative recovery. The following policy outlines clinical documentation required for review of all solid organ and stem cell/bone marrow transplant requests.

*\*Note: For corneal transplant, pancreatic islet cell auto-transplant after pancreatectomy, or parathyroid auto-transplant after thyroidectomy requests, please complete the Health Plan specific prior authorization form located on the Health Plan website.*

## Policy/Criteria

- I. It is the policy of Louisiana Healthcare Connections that requests for transplant evaluation following the first visit for HLA (human leukocyte antigen) typing/stem cell collection/donor search and transplant consultation or transplant listing at a participating facility are **medically necessary** when all of the following clinical documentation are included:
  - A. For transplant evaluation requests, all of the following:
    1. Appropriate prior authorization form;
    2. Routine complete history and physical within one year including:
      - a. History of present illness, including a list of all current medications;
      - b. Past medical history, pertinent family history and social history;
      - c. Complete review of systems, physical examination, including height, weight and body mass index (BMI).

*\*Note: Approved requests for transplant evaluation are effective for six months. After six months have passed, a new authorization is required.*
  - B. For initial and subsequent transplant listing requests, all of the following:
    1. Appropriate prior authorization form;
    2. Letter of medical necessity from a transplant service physician with signature;
    3. Complete history and physical performed by a transplant service physician within 12 months of kidney transplant requests or 6 months of other transplant requests, including:
      - a. History of present illness, including a list of all current medications;
      - b. Past medical history, pertinent family history and social history;

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- c. Complete review of systems, physical examination, including height, weight and BMI;
4. Basic labs (complete chemistry panel/liver function tests and complete blood count) within 12 months for kidney transplants or 6 months for other transplants;
5. Appropriate testing and imaging for the requested transplant:
  - a. Liver – International normalized ratio (INR), Model for End Stage Liver Disease (MELD) or Pediatric End Stage Liver Disease Model (PELD) score, hepatitis serologies, imaging studies (MRI, CT, ultrasound), and liver biopsy as indicated;
  - b. Kidney – Glomerular filtration rate (GFR) or creatinine clearance if not on dialysis;
  - c. Heart – echocardiogram, right cardiac catheterization results including pulmonary vascular resistance (PVR) results. NYHA Class and peak VO2 results;
  - d. Lung – Pulmonary function tests, imaging (chest x-rays and/or CT scans), and six-minute walk test;
  - e. Pancreas – BMI, C-peptide, and history of insulin treatment;
  - f. Intestine/Multivisceral - no specific additional testing;
  - g. Stem cell – most recent bone marrow biopsy as indicated, most recent Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group (ECOG) score or Karnofsky score and documentation of donor identification for allogeneic transplants;
6. Annual dental evaluation and clearance (transplant clearance from DDS or a panoramic dental x-ray with clearance from MD);
7. Routine health screening exams as per standards of care (e.g., mammogram, Pap, and/or colonoscopy; these particular screenings are not required for autologous stem cell transplant);
8. Appropriate comorbidity testing/clearance, including cardiology;
9. Serum or urine drug screen results (within 90 days of request);
10. Infectious disease screening for solid organ or allogeneic stem cell transplant, all of the following, as applicable:
  - a. CMV (cytomegalovirus) and VZV (varicella-zoster virus) within one year unless baseline IgG antibody positive;
  - b. EBV (Epstein Barr virus) within one year, unless baseline IgG antibody positive;
  - c. Toxoplasma titer for heart transplant recipients;
  - d. Results of annual purified protein derivative (PPD), T-Spot, or QuantiFERON for all solid organ transplants, unless previously positive;
  - e. Hepatitis B testing within one year, unless baseline surface antibody positive;
  - f. Hepatitis C within one year unless baseline positive (viral load required within three months if positive);
  - g. RPR (rapid plasma regain) within one year;
  - h. HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) within one year, unless baseline positive (CD4 count and viral load required within three months if positive);
11. Detailed psychosocial evaluation and clearance within 12 months for kidney transplants and 6 months for other transplants.
 

*\* Note: Approved requests for transplant listings are effective for twelve months. After twelve months have passed, a new authorization with updated clinical documentation is required.*

C. Requests for continuity of care authorizations must include the following:

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1. Documentation of previous insurer coverage, such as if previously covered by state Medicaid fee for service;
2. Documentation of authorization for coverage of transplant evaluation or listings by previous insurer;
3. Copy of United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) listing.

- II. It is the policy of Louisiana Healthcare Connections that authorizations for transplant services at multiple facilities for a single member/enrollee, or requests for additional evaluations following transplant listing or transplant evaluation approval has already been rendered are considered **medically necessary** for either of the following:
- A. Member/enrollee has an episode of illness resulting in a change to transplant eligibility status;
  - B. Member/enrollee is admitted to a geographically closer facility and is not stable for transfer to the previously approved facility due to declining medical status.

### Background

According to the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), 41,354 organ transplants were performed in the United States in 2021, demonstrating an increase of 5.9% over 2020.<sup>10,11</sup> According to the Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research (CIBMTR), 4,864 unrelated and 4,160 related bone marrow and cord blood transplants were performed in the United States.<sup>20</sup> Annual records were set for kidney, liver and heart transplants with the 40,000-transplant milestone exceeded for the first time. The Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) reports there are more than 105,000 people on the national transplant waiting list with a new name added to the list approximately every nine minutes. There are more people in need of transplants than there are donors and seventeen people die each day waiting for an organ transplant. Organ donation from one donor can save eight lives and enhance more than seventy five.<sup>8,9,10,11</sup>

### *Solid Organ Transplantation*

Chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular, kidney, and liver disease, as well as, cancer, and diabetes are primary causes of morbidity and mortality in the United States.<sup>13</sup> Solid organ transplantation is the treatment of choice for several types of organ failure.<sup>17</sup> Many patients awaiting an organ transplant face serious challenges, such as travel expenses, living donor expenses, anti-rejection medications, and procedures required to maintain the health of the transplant.<sup>14</sup> Most available organ donations come from deceased donors, although approximately 6,000 transplants coming from healthy, living donors each year. A series of tests must be completed to ensure the donor and recipient blood and tissue types are compatible.<sup>15</sup> A pretransplant evaluation identifies the risk for post-transplant infections and evaluates exposure history, prior infections, serologic testing for distant exposures, cultures to identify colonization patterns, and administration of vaccines. Active infections, such as HIV, hepatitis B and C, and severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 are evaluated near the time of transplantation as well.<sup>17</sup> Additional factors that may be considered during the process are the patient's current medical status, geographical location, and time on the transplant list.<sup>16</sup> Organ transplantation can still occur in the absence of donor and recipient blood and tissue match; however, special treatments are needed to prevent rejection of the organ.<sup>15</sup> Infection and malignancy are two complications that result from the life-long immunosuppression required to maintain allograft

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function following transplantation. Since established infection is more challenging to treat in the immunocompromised transplant recipient, the pretransplant evaluation is essential to treatment and must be comprehensive.<sup>17</sup>

#### *Stem Cell/Bone Marrow Transplantation*

Autologous hematopoietic cell transplantation (HCT) describes the use of a patient's own cells to rebuild bone marrow following intensive chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy to treat cancer. Treatment outcomes are dependent upon indicated risks and the underlying disease process. Diseases that can be treated include but are not limited to, multiple myeloma, Hodgkin lymphoma, acute myeloid leukemias and amyloidosis. Pretransplant evaluation prior to autologous HCT should include an assessment of comorbid conditions and the status of the underlying cancer. The evaluation should also include a clinical assessment, laboratory studies, and infectious disease screening, as well as cardiac and pulmonary assessments, and a bone marrow and central nervous system evaluation. An assessment of functional status is also recommended using either the Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group (ECOG) scale or Karnofsky Performance Status. Eligibility criteria varies between institutions but should include comorbidities, organ function, functional status, psychosocial status and disease state.<sup>18</sup>

Allogeneic hematopoietic cell transplantation (HCT) describes the use of hematopoietic cells from another healthy person (e.g., sibling, relative, volunteer donor, umbilical cord blood) to treat a variety of hematologic cancers and nonmalignant marrow disorders, including inborn error of metabolism. Variation exists in eligibility requirements across countries and institutions. Diseases that can be treated include, but are not limited to, acute myeloid leukemia (AML), chronic lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL), follicular lymphoma, nonhematologic malignancies, and nonmalignant inherited and acquired marrow disorders. A pretransplant assessment evaluates the extent of disease and severity of comorbidities to determine the appropriateness of the candidate. The assessment includes a detailed history and physical examination, chest x-ray, electrocardiogram, pulmonary function tests, cardiac function study, and laboratory tests, inclusive of an assessment of prior exposure to infectious agents. Although numerous scoring systems are available for estimating mortality risk in patients considering allogeneic HCT, the European Group for Blood and Marrow Transplantation (EBMT) risk assessment score for allogeneic transplantation and the Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation - Specific Comorbidity Index (HCT-CI) are most frequently used. Future studies are needed to validate the various scoring systems, however, all scoring systems, including the Karnofsky performance status, can help patients understand mortality risk following allogeneic HCT. Pretransplant counseling is also suggested to support end-of-life advance care planning, fertility preservation, and patient expectations.<sup>19</sup>

#### **Coding Implications**

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Providers should reference the most up-to-date sources of professional coding guidance prior to the submission of claims for reimbursement of covered services.

Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals	Revision Date	Approval Date
Rebrand from Corporate policy	2/23	4/18/23

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#### **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.

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to recommend treatment for members/enrollees. Members/enrollees should consult with their treating physician in connection with diagnosis and treatment decisions.

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