Hippotherapy
(Equine Therapy)
Policy Number: HS-168

Original Effective Date: 5/6/2010


APPLICATION STATEMENT
The application of the Clinical Coverage Guideline is subject to the benefit determinations set forth by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) National and Local Coverage Determinations and state-specific Medicaid mandates, if any.
Hippotherapy is a physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech-language pathology treatment strategy that uses the multidimensional movement of the horse to improve neuromuscular function and sensory processing in children and adults with movement dysfunction. The term hippotherapy is literally defined as "treatment with the help of the horse" from the Greek word hippos, meaning horse. It is part of an integrated treatment strategy performed by healthcare professionals, including specially trained physical and occupational therapists. Hippotherapy is considered a distinct subspecialty of the broad, umbrella term “therapeutic riding.” Therapeutic riding refers to the use of the horse and equine-oriented activities to achieve a variety of therapeutic goals, including physical, emotional, social, cognitive, behavioral, and educational goals. Therapeutic riding generally encompasses both leisure and therapeutic activities and may be conducted by nontherapist riding instructors and assistants. In contrast, hippotherapy is specialized and is always directed by a licensed healthcare professional. Functional riding and horsemanship skills are not taught during hippotherapy. Rather, the emphasis is on the achievement of specific therapeutic goals facilitated by the movement of the horse. Despite the unusual nature of hippotherapy, its rationale is based on current theories of motor development and control and established neurophysiologic treatment principles. Hippotherapy has been used for a wide variety of conditions and medical disorders since the 1950s. Conditions that may be improved through hippotherapy include abnormal muscle tone; impaired balance responses; impaired coordination; impaired communication; impaired sensorimotor function; postural asymmetry; poor postural control; decreased mobility; and limbic system issues related to arousal, motivation, and attention. Hippotherapy has been used in patients with amputations, autism, back pain, cerebral palsy, developmental disorders, Down syndrome, hemiplegia, genetic syndromes, learning disabilities, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, posttraumatic stress syndrome, sensory integration disorders, speech-language disorders, spinal cord injury, spina bifida, stroke, and traumatic brain injury. Hippotherapy has been used in patients varying in age from toddler to adult (Hayes, 2009).

POSITION STATEMENT

Applicable To:

- Medicaid – Florida

Hippotherapy is a covered benefit for a member who:

- Participates in a Case or Disease Management program; AND,
- Is a child or adult with SSI or is a dually eligible enrollee; AND,
- Member has a diagnosis of
  - cerebral palsy; OR
  - an eating disorder; OR
  - post-traumatic stress disorder; OR
  - autism (excludes autism spectrum disorder)

Benefit is limited to 10 free riding sessions per year at Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH) centers, led by certified instructors and equine therapists.

NOTE: There is no age requirement to receive coverage for Hippotherapy if all criteria are met.
Hippotherapy, also known as equine therapy, is considered experimental and investigational and NOT a covered benefit in all cases.

CODING

FLORIDA MARKET ONLY  Covered CPT® Codes
97139  Unlisted Therapeutic procedure
97799  Unlisted Physical medicine / rehabilitation service or procedure

FLORIDA MARKET ONLY  HCPCS Level II Code
S8940  Equestrian / hippotherapy, per session
*S- Codes are NON COVERED FOR MEDICARE

ICD-9-CM Procedure Codes - No applicable codes.

DRAFT 2013 ICD-10-PCD Codes - No applicable codes

FLORIDA MARKET ONLY  ICD-9-CM Diagnosis Codes
299.00 - 299.01  Autism, excludes autism spectrum disorder
307.50  Eating Disorder, unspecified
309.81  Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
343.0 - 343.9  Infantile Cerebral Palsy

FLORIDA MARKET ONLY  Draft 2013 ICD-10CM Diagnosis Codes
F43.10 - F43.12  Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
F50.9  Eating Disorder, unspecified
F84.0  Autistic disorder
G80.0 - G80.9  Cerebral Palsy


REFERENCES

Peer Reviewed


Government Agencies, Professional and Medical Organizations

### MEDICAL POLICY COMMITTEE HISTORY AND REVISIONS

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<td>6/18/2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/3/2014</td>
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<td>8/15/2013</td>
<td>Approved by MPC. Language incorporated for Florida market.</td>
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