

New Process For Outpatient Rehabilitation Services Begins July 1

Effective July 1, 2016, Premera will introduce a new process for outpatient rehabilitation services that is designed to help members get the most from their coverage by ensuring treatments are right for their condition, effective, and medically necessary.

Premera will be partnering with eviCore healthcare for this new process because of their expertise in helping members reduce or eliminate ineffective use of benefits. Limiting unnecessary services helps control costs for everyone, and it helps set expectations for employers that costs for rehabilitation services will be managed wisely.

The new process

Here's how the authorization and review process for outpatient rehabilitation services will work for dates of service July 1, 2016, and after:

- The member goes directly to the provider who can provide outpatient rehabilitation services (not the referring physician). The first visit, which includes an evaluation and possibly treatment, is covered based on benefit eligibility.
- The provider, after seeing the member, develops an outpatient rehabilitation treatment plan and sends the plan to eviCore for review.
- eviCore evaluates the treatment plan, determines medical necessity and notifies the provider and us of the number of authorized visits.
- Providers who send treatment plans using eviCore healthcare's online portal will, in many cases, obtain a response to their request in real-time.

Types of services

Outpatient rehabilitation services included in this program are:

- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Massage therapy
- Rehabilitation services provided by chiropractors (This does not include spinal manipulations.)

The program will not be used to manage speech therapy, neurological occupational or physical therapy, and cardiac or oncology rehabilitation.

Communication to members

The new process for outpatient rehabilitation services impacts all Washington, Alaska and Oregon insured individual and employer group plans, including Optiflex groups. Premera will be reaching out to members who recently received treatment and those who had more than 50 visits in the past year. Members also will be notified by eviCore in writing if a request for services is not approved. This notice will include the member's appeal rights and instructions to file an appeal.