Wigs

Policy Number: **M20141219095**

Effective Date: **2/1/2014**

Sponsoring Department: **Health Care Services**

Impacted Department(s): **Health Care Services**

Type of Policy: ☒ Internal ☒ External

Data Classification: ☐Confidential ☐Restricted ☒Public

Applies to (Line of Business):

☐ Corporate (All)

☒ State Products, if yes which plan(s): ☒MediSource; ☒ MediSource Connect; ☒Child Health Plus ☒Essential Plan

☐ Medicare, if yes, which plan(s): ☒MAPD; ☐PDP; ☒ISNP; ☒CSNP

☒ Commercial, if yes, which type: ☒Large Group; ☒Small Group; ☒Individual

☒ Self-Funded Services *(Refer to specific Summary Plan Descriptions (SPDs) to determine any pre-authorization or pre-certification requirements and coverage limitations. In the event of any conflict between this policy and the SPD of a Self-Funded Plan, the SPD shall supersede the policy.)*

Excluded Products within the Selected Lines of Business (LOB)

Applicable to Vendors? Yes ☐ No☒

Purpose and Applicability:

To set forth coverage determination information for wigs.

Policy:

Commercial and Self-Funded:

Individual and Small Group Commercially Insured Product:

Wigs are covered for members with severe hair loss (greater than 50 percent scalp hair loss) due to injury, disease or as a side effect of treatment of a disease (such as chemotherapy). Individual and Small Group Commercially Insured Product members are eligible to receive 1 synthetic wig per lifetime up to current allowable amount. A member is eligible for a natural hair wig with a documented allergy to synthetic wig use per lifetime up to current allowable amount.

Large Group Commercially Insured Product, Self-funded:
For most Large Group Policies, wigs are not a covered benefit. However, please see specific group contract for applicable benefit guidance.

Medicare Advantage:
Medicare Advantage does not cover wigs.

MediSource, MediSource Connect:
Wigs are a covered benefit for MediSource and MediSource Connect and are subject to medical necessity. Coverage is limited to medically induced or congenital hair loss.

Medicaid provides replacement if a wig becomes unusable or lost.

Child Health Plus:
Child Health Plus does not cover wigs.

Essential Plan:
Essential Plan covers wigs for severe hair loss due to injury or disease or as a side effect of the treatment of a disease (e.g., chemotherapy). Essential Plan does not cover wigs made from human hair unless the member is allergic to all synthetic wig materials.

Background:
Hair loss may be a common problem related to aging, **alopecia** related to an underlying medical condition, or as a side effect from receiving chemotherapy.

Pre-Authorization Required?   Yes ☐   No ☒

Pre-authorization is not required at the present time. Criteria above will be utilized upon retro-review.

Definitions

Alopecia Areata: Alopecia areata is characterized by areas of nonscarring hair loss that range from single oval patches to multiple patches that can become confluent. Alopecia is associated with autoimmune conditions, such as vitiligo, diabetes, thyroid disease, rheumatoid arthritis, and discoid lupus erythematosus.

Alopecia totalis: Alopecia totalis is loss of all scalp hair.

Alopecia universalis: Alopecia universalis refers to loss of all scalp and body hair.

Alopecia related to chemotherapy: Patients receiving chemotherapy may lose hair from all over the body, gradually or in clumps. This most often starts after the first several weeks or rounds of chemotherapy and tends to increase one to two months into treatment.

References

Related Policies, Processes and Other Documents

N/A

Non-Regulatory references

American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) [web site].Chemotherapy Side Effects Last Revised: May 1, 2020 . Available at: https://www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/treatment-types/chemotherapy/chemotherapy-side-effects.html#:~:text=Here%20are%20some%20of%20the%20more%20common%20side,blood%20cell%20counts%29%20Nausea%20and%20vomiting%20Appetite%20changes Accessed May 5, 2025

Messenger AG. Alopecia areata: Management. In: Up-to-date, Post TW (Ed), Up-to-date, Waltham, MA. Accessed on July 8, 2024

Mounsey AL, Reed SW. Diagnosing and treating hair loss. Am Fam Physician. 2009 Aug 15;80(4):356-62.

Regulatory References

New York State Department of Health, Division of Managed Care Response to Coverage Question (CovQuest). MA-0004. February 9, 2010.

New York State Department of Health [web site]. New York State Medicaid Program. Durable Medical Equipment Procedure Codes and Coverage Guidelines Available at: https://www.emedny.org/ProviderManuals/DME/PDFS/DME_Procedure_Codes.pdf Accessed May 5, 2025

This policy contains medical necessity criteria that apply for this service. Please note that payment for covered services is subject to eligibility criteria, contract exclusions and the limitations noted in the member's contract at the time the services are rendered.

Version Control

Signature / Approval on File? Yes ☒ No☐

Revision Date	Owner	Notes
9/1/2025	Health Care Services	Reviewed
9/1/2024	Health Care Services	Reviewed
9/1/2023	Health Care Services	Revised
9/1/2022	Health Care Services	Reviewed
10/1/2021	Health Care Services	Reviewed
10/1/2020	Health Care Services	Reviewed
11/1/2019	Medical Management	Revised

12/1/2018	Medical Management	Revised
1/1/2018	Medical Management	Revised
2/1/2017	Medical Management	Revised
2/1/2016	Medical Management	Revised
2/1/2015	Medical Management	Revised