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Objective:

To provide a guide to coverage of oxygen based on nationally accepted standards.

Policy:

- I. Oxygen coverage for adults in the home setting and oxygen equipment may be approved when the following criteria has been met:
 - A. The treating physician has determined that the member has a severe lung diseases or hypoxia-related symptoms that might be expected to improve with oxygen therapy
 - B. The member's blood gas study meets the criteria below
 - C. The qualifying blood gas study was performed by a physician or by a qualified provider or supplier of laboratory services
 - D. The qualifying blood gas study was obtained under the following conditions:
 1. If the qualifying blood gas study is performed during an inpatient hospital stay, the reported test must be the one obtained closest to but no earlier than 2 days prior to the hospital discharge date or
 2. If the qualifying blood gas study is not performed during an inpatient stay, the reported test must be performed while the member is in a chronic stable state, not during a period of acute illness or an exacerbation of their underlying disease
- II. Alternative treatment measures have been tried or considered and deemed clinically ineffective.
- III. Acute short term conditions to prevent hospitalizations.
- IV. The term "blood gas study" refers to either an arterial blood gas (ABG) test, or an oximetry test. An ABG is the direct measurement of the partial pressure of oxygen (PO₂) on a sample of arterial blood. The PO₂ is reported a mmHg. An oximetry test is the indirect measurement of arterial oxygen saturation using a sensor on the ear or finger. The saturation is reported as a percent.
- V. When both the ABG and oximetry tests have been performed on the same day under the same conditions, the ABG result will be used to determine if the

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coverage criteria were met. If an ABG test at rest/wake is non-qualifying, the oximetry test result will determine coverage.

VI. Criteria

A. Group I

1. An arterial PO₂ at or below 55 mm Hg, or an arterial oxygen saturation at or below 88% taken at rest (awake) or
2. An arterial PO₂ at or below 55 mm Hg, or an arterial oxygen saturation at or below 88%, taken for at least 5 minutes during sleep for a patient who demonstrates an arterial PO₂ at or above 56 mm Hg or an arterial oxygen saturation at or above 89% while awake, or
3. A decrease in arterial PO₂ more than 10 mm HG, or a decrease in arterial oxygen saturation more than 5% taken for at least 5 minutes during sleep associated with symptoms or signs reasonable attributable to hypoxemia
4. An arterial PO₂ at or below 55 mm Hg or an arterial oxygen saturation at or below 8% taken during exercise for a patient who demonstrates an arterial PO₂ at or above 56 mm Hg or an arterial saturation at or above 89% during the day at rest. In this instance, oxygen is provided for during exercise if it is documented the use of oxygen improves the hypoxemia that was demonstrated during exercise when the member was breathing room air.

- B. Group II- includes the presence of an arterial PO₂ of 56-59 mm Hg or an arterial blood oxygen saturation of 89% at rest (awake), during sleep, or during exercise and any of the following:
1. Dependent edema suggesting congestive heart failure
 2. Pulmonary hypertension or cor pulmonale, determined by measurement of pulmonary artery pressure, gated blood pool scan, echocardiogram, or "P" pulmonale on EKG
 3. Erythrocythermia with a hematocrit greater than 56%

- C. Group III includes patients with arterial PO₂ levels at or above 60 mmHg or arterial blood oxygen saturations at or above 90%. Home oxygen use is not medically appropriate for patients with these measurements.

- VII. Initial coverage for patients meeting group II criteria is limited to 3 months or the physician specified length of need, whichever is shorter.

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VIII. Recertification

A. Group I

1. The most recent blood gas study prior to the 13th month of therapy must be reported on the Recertification "Certification of Medical Necessity" (CMN)
2. If the estimated length of need on the initial CMN is less than lifetime and the prescribing practitioner wants to extend coverage, a repeat blood gas study must be performed within 30 days prior to the date of the revised certification

B. Group II

The most recent blood gas study that was performed between the 61st and 90th day following initial certification must be reported on the recertification CMN. If a qualifying test is not obtained between the 61st & 90th day of home oxygen therapy, but the patient continues to use oxygen and a test is obtained at a later date, if that test meets Group I or II criteria, coverage would resume beginning with the date of that test. For patients initially meeting Group II criteria, if the estimated length of need on the initial certification is less than lifetime and the physician wants to extend coverage, a repeat blood gas study must be performed within 30 days prior to the date of the revised certification.

- C. Group III includes patients with arterial PO₂ levels at or above 60 mmHg or arterial blood oxygen saturations at or above 90%

IX. Portable Oxygen

- A. Is covered if the member is mobile within the home and the qualifying blood gas study was performed while at rest (awake) or during exercise
- B. If the only qualifying blood gas study was performed during sleep, portable oxygen is not covered
- C. Portable oxygen system must be physician prescribed and is limited to the most cost effective, clinically appropriate equipment.

X. Documentation

- A. A Certificate of Medical Necessity is required to support medical necessity for initial certification
- B. The documentation of medical necessity must be reviewed and signed by the treating physician and kept on file

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XI. Recertification of Certification of Medical Necessity

A. Group I

The most recent blood gas study prior to the 13th month of therapy must be reported on the recertification documentation. If the estimated length of need on the initial certification is less than lifetime and the physician wants to extend coverage, a repeat blood gas study must be performed within 30 days prior to the date of the revised certification.

B. Group II

The most recent blood gas study which was performed between the 61st and 90th day following the initial certification must be reported on the certification documentation. If a qualifying test is not obtained between the 61st and 90th day of home oxygen therapy, but the patient continues to use oxygen

Refer: DMERC (Medicare)
Providence Health Plans DME Policy
Milliman Care Guidelines AC Oxygen Therapy
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