

**WAC 284-43-0160 Definitions.** Except as defined in other sub-chapters and unless the context requires otherwise, the following definitions shall apply throughout this chapter.

(1) "Adverse determination" has the same meaning as the definition of adverse benefit determination in RCW 48.43.005, and includes:

(a) The determination includes any decision by a health carrier's designee utilization review organization that a request for a benefit under the health carrier's health benefit plan does not meet the health carrier's requirements for medical necessity, appropriateness, health care setting, level of care, or effectiveness or is determined to be experimental or investigational and the requested benefit is therefore denied, reduced, or terminated or payment is not provided or made, in whole or in part for the benefit;

(b) The denial, reduction, termination, or failure to provide or make payment, in whole or in part, for a benefit based on a determination by a health carrier or its designee utilization review organization of a covered person's eligibility to participate in the health carrier's health benefit plan;

(c) Any prospective review or retrospective review determination that denies, reduces, or terminates or fails to provide or make payment in whole or in part for a benefit;

(d) A rescission of coverage determination; or

(e) A carrier's denial of an application for coverage.

(2) "Authorization" or "certification" means a determination by the carrier that an admission, extension of stay, or other health care service has been reviewed and, based on the information provided, meets the clinical requirements for medical necessity, appropriateness, level of care, or effectiveness in relation to the applicable health plan.

(3) "Behavioral health agency" means an agency licensed or certified under RCW 71.24.037.

(4) "Clinical review criteria" means the written screens or screening procedures, decision rules, medical protocols, or clinical practice guidelines used by the carrier as an element in the evaluation of medical necessity and appropriateness of requested admissions, procedures, and services, including prescription drug benefits, under the auspices of the applicable plan. Clinical approval criteria has the same meaning as clinical review criteria.

(5) "Covered health condition" means any disease, illness, injury or condition of health risk covered according to the terms of any health plan.

(6) "Covered person" or "enrollee" means an individual covered by a health plan including a subscriber, policyholder, or beneficiary of a group plan.

(7) "Emergency fill" means a limited dispensed amount of medication that allows time for the processing of a preauthorization request. Emergency fill only applies to those circumstances where a patient presents at a contracted pharmacy with an immediate therapeutic need for a prescribed medication that requires a prior authorization.

(8) "Emergency medical condition" has the meaning set forth in RCW 48.43.005.

(9) "Emergency services" has the meaning set forth in RCW 48.43.005.

(10) "Enrollee point-of-service cost-sharing" or "cost-sharing" means amounts paid to health carriers directly providing services, health care providers, or health care facilities by enrollees and may include copayments, coinsurance, or deductibles.

(11) "Expedited prior authorization request" has the meaning set forth in RCW 48.43.830.

(12) "Facility" means an institution providing health care services including, but not limited to, hospitals and other licensed inpatient centers, ambulatory surgical or treatment centers, skilled nursing centers, residential treatment centers, diagnostic, laboratory, and imaging centers, and rehabilitation and other therapeutic settings, and as defined in RCW 48.43.005.

(13) "Formulary" means a listing of drugs used within a health plan. A formulary must include drugs covered under an enrollee's medical benefit.

(14) "Grievance" has the meaning set forth in RCW 48.43.005.

(15) "Health care provider" or "provider" means:

(a) A person regulated under Title 18 RCW or chapter 70.127 RCW, to practice health or health-related services or otherwise practicing health care services in this state consistent with state law; or

(b) An employee or agent of a person described in (a) of this subsection, acting in the course and scope of his or her employment.

(16) "Health care service" or "health service" means that service offered or provided by health care facilities and health care providers relating to the prevention, cure, or treatment of illness, injury, or disease.

(17) "Health carrier" or "carrier" means a disability insurance company regulated under chapter 48.20 or 48.21 RCW, a health care service contractor as defined in RCW 48.44.010, and a health maintenance organization as defined in RCW 48.46.020, and includes "issuers" as that term is used in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (P.L. 111-148, as amended (2010)).

(18) "Health plan" or "plan" means any individual or group policy, contract, or agreement offered by a health carrier to provide, arrange, reimburse, or pay for health care service except the following:

(a) Long-term care insurance governed by chapter 48.84 RCW;

(b) Medicare supplemental health insurance governed by chapter 48.66 RCW;

(c) Limited health care service offered by limited health care service contractors in accordance with RCW 48.44.035;

(d) Disability income;

(e) Coverage incidental to a property/casualty liability insurance policy such as automobile personal injury protection coverage and homeowner guest medical;

(f) Workers' compensation coverage;

(g) Accident only coverage;

(h) Specified disease and hospital confinement indemnity when marketed solely as a supplement to a health plan;

(i) Employer-sponsored self-funded health plans;

(j) Dental only and vision only coverage; and

(k) Plans deemed by the insurance commissioner to have a short-term limited purpose or duration, or to be a student-only plan that is guaranteed renewable while the covered person is enrolled as a regular full-time undergraduate or graduate student at an accredited higher education institution, after a written request for such classification by the carrier and subsequent written approval by the insurance commissioner.

(19) "Immediate therapeutic needs" means those needs where passage of time without treatment would result in imminent emergency care, hospital admission or might seriously jeopardize the life or health of the patient or others in contact with the patient.

(20) "Indian health care provider" means:

(a) The Indian Health Service, an agency operated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services established by the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, Section 601, 25 U.S.C. §1661;

(b) An Indian tribe, as defined in the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, Section 4(14), 25 U.S.C. §1603(14), that operates a health program under a contract or compact to carry out programs of the Indian Health Service pursuant to the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA), 25 U.S.C. §450 et seq.;

(c) A tribal organization, as defined in the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, Section 4(26), 25 U.S.C. §1603(26), that operates a health program under a contract or compact to carry out programs of the Indian Health Service pursuant to the ISDEAA, 25 U.S.C. §450 et seq.;

(d) An Indian tribe, as defined in the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, Section 4(14), 25 U.S.C. §1603(14), or tribal organization, as defined in the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, Section 4(26), 25 U.S.C. §1603(26), that operates a health program with funding provided in whole or part pursuant to 25 U.S.C. §47 (commonly known as the Buy Indian Act); or

(e) An urban Indian organization that operates a health program with funds in whole or part provided by Indian Health Service under a grant or contract awarded pursuant to Title V of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, Section 4(29), 25 U.S.C. §1603(29).

(21) "Managed care plan" means a health plan that coordinates the provision of covered health care services to a covered person through the use of a primary care provider and a network.

(22) "Medically necessary" or "medical necessity" in regard to mental health services and pharmacy services is a carrier determination as to whether a health service is a covered benefit because the service is consistent with generally recognized standards within a relevant health profession.

(23) "Mental health provider" means a health care provider or a health care facility authorized by state law to provide mental health services.

(24) "Mental health services" means in-patient or out-patient treatment including, but not limited to, partial hospitalization, residential treatment, out-patient facility-based treatment, intensive outpatient treatment, emergency services, or prescription drugs to manage, stabilize or ameliorate the effects of a mental disorder listed in the most current version of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)* published by the American Psychiatric Association, including diagnoses and treatment for substance use disorder.

(25) "Network" means the group of participating providers and facilities providing health care services to a particular health plan or line of business (individual, small, or large group). A health plan network for issuers offering more than one health plan may be smaller in number than the total number of participating providers and facilities for all plans offered by the carrier.

(26) "Participating provider" and "participating facility" means a facility or provider who, under a contract with the health carrier or with the carrier's contractor or subcontractor, has agreed to provide health care services to covered persons with an expectation of receiving payment, other than coinsurance, copayments, or deductibles, from the health carrier rather than from the covered person.

(27) "Person" means an individual, a corporation, a partnership, an association, a joint venture, a joint stock company, a trust, an unincorporated organization, any similar entity, or any combination of the foregoing.

(28) "Pharmacy services" means the practice of pharmacy as defined in chapter 18.64 RCW and includes any drugs or devices as defined in chapter 18.64 RCW.

(29) "Predetermination request" means a voluntary request from an enrollee or provider or facility for a carrier or its designated or contracted representative to determine if a service is a benefit, in relation to the applicable plan.

(30) "Preservice requirement" means any requirement that a carrier places on a provider or facility that may limit their ability to deliver a service that requires prior authorization. Examples include limits on the type of provider or facility delivering the service, a service that must be provided before a specific service will be authorized, site of care/place of service, and whether a provider administered medication needs to be obtained from a specialty pharmacy.

(31) "Primary care provider" means a participating provider who supervises, coordinates, or provides initial care or continuing care to a covered person, and who may be required by the health carrier to initiate a referral for specialty care and maintain supervision of health care services rendered to the covered person.

(32) "Preexisting condition" means any medical condition, illness, or injury that existed any time prior to the effective date of coverage.

(33) "Premium" means all sums charged, received, or deposited by a health carrier as consideration for a health plan or the continuance of a health plan. Any assessment or any "membership," "policy," "contract," "service," or similar fee or charge made by a health carrier in consideration for a health plan is deemed part of the premium. "Premium" shall not include amounts paid as enrollee point-of-service cost-sharing.

(34) "Prior authorization" means a mandatory process that a carrier or its designated or contracted representative requires a provider or facility to follow to determine if a service is a benefit and meets the requirements for medical necessity, clinical appropriateness, level of care, or effectiveness in relation to the applicable plan. Prior authorization occurs before the service is delivered. For purposes of WAC 284-43-2050 and 284-43-2060, any term used by a carrier or its designated or contracted representative to describe this process is prior authorization. For example, prior authorization has also been referred to as "prospective review," "preauthorization," or "precertification."

(35) "Service area" means the geographic area or areas where a specific product is issued, accepts members or enrollees, and covers provided services. A service area must be defined by the county or counties included unless, for good cause, the commissioner permits limitation of a service area by zip code. Good cause includes geographic barriers within a service area, or other conditions that make offering coverage throughout an entire county unreasonable.

(36) "Small group plan" means a health plan issued to a small employer as defined under RCW 48.43.005(33) comprising from one to 50 eligible employees.

(37) "Standard prior authorization request" has the meaning set forth in RCW 48.43.830.

(38) "Step therapy protocol" means a drug utilization management prior authorization protocol or program that establishes the specific sequence in which prescription drugs are covered by a health carrier for a medical condition.

(39) "Substance use disorder" means a substance-related or addictive disorder listed in the most current version of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)* published by the American Psychiatric Association.

(40) "Substitute drug" means a prescription medication, drug or therapy that a carrier covers based on an exception request. When the exception request is based on therapeutic equivalence, a substitute drug means a therapeutically equivalent substance as defined in chapter 69.41 RCW.

(41) "Supplementary pharmacy services" or "other pharmacy services" means pharmacy services involving the provision of drug therapy management and other services not required under state and federal law but that may be rendered in connection with dispensing, or that may be used in disease prevention or disease management.

(42) "Withdrawal management services" means 24 hour medically managed or medically monitored detoxification and assessment and treatment referral for adults or adolescents withdrawing from alcohol or drugs, which may include induction of medications for addiction recovery.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 48.02.060, 48.43.735, 48.44.050, 48.46.200, 48.200.040, and 48.200.900. WSR 23-24-034 (Matter R 2023-07), § 284-43-0160, filed 11/30/23, effective 1/1/24. Statutory Authority: RCW 48.02.060, 48.20.460, 48.43.0128, 48.44.050, and 48.46.200. WSR 20-24-040, § 284-43-0160, filed 11/23/20, effective 12/24/20. Statutory Authority: RCW 48.02.060, 48.43.510, 48.43.515, 48.43.520, 48.43.525, 48.43.530, and 48.165.030. WSR 17-12-069 (Matter No. R 2016-19), § 284-43-0160, filed 6/5/17, effective 7/6/17. Statutory Authority: RCW 48.02.060, 48.43.510. WSR 17-01-166 (Matter No. R 2016-16), § 284-43-0160, filed 12/21/16, effective 7/1/17. WSR 16-01-081, recodified as § 284-43-0160, filed 12/14/15, effective 12/14/15. Statutory Authority: RCW 48.02.060, 48.20.450, 48.20.460, 48.165.0301, 48.43.525, 48.43.530, 48.44.020, 48.44.050, 48.46.060(2), and 48.46.200. WSR 15-24-074 (Matter No. R 2014-13), § 284-43-130, filed 11/25/15, effective 7/1/16. Statutory Authority: RCW 48.02.060, 48.18.120, 48.20.460, 48.43.505, 48.43.510, 48.43.515, 48.43.530, 48.43.535, 48.44.050, 48.46.200, 48.20.450, 48.44.020, 48.44.080, 48.46.030, 45 C.F.R. §§ 156.230, 156.235, and 156.245. WSR 14-10-017 (Matter No. R 2013-22), § 284-43-130, filed 4/25/14, effective 5/26/14. Statutory Authority: RCW 48.02.060, 48.43.525, 48.43.530, 48.43.535, and The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, P.L. 111-148, as amended (2010). WSR 12-23-005 (Matter No. R 2011-11), § 284-43-130, filed 11/7/12, effective 11/20/12. Statutory Authority: RCW 48.02.060, 48.18.120, 48.20.450, 48.20.460, 48.30.010, 48.44.050, 48.46.100, 48.46.200, 48.43.505, 48.43.510, 48.43.515, 48.43.520, 48.43.525, 48.43.530, 48.43.535. WSR 01-03-033 (Matter No. R 2000-02), § 284-43-130, filed 1/9/01, effective 7/1/01. Statutory Authority: RCW 48.02.060, 48.20.450, 48.20.460, 48.30.010, 48.44.050, 48.46.200, 2000 c 79 § 26, and RCW 48.30.040, 48.44.110, 48.46.400. WSR 01-03-032 (Matter No. R 2000-04), § 284-43-130, filed 1/9/01, effective 2/9/01. Statutory Authority: RCW 48.02.060, 48.30.010, 48.44.050, 48.46.200, 48.30.040, 48.44.110 and 48.46.400. WSR 99-19-032 (Matter No. R 98-7), § 284-43-130, filed 9/8/99, effective 10/9/99. Statutory Authority:

RCW 48.02.060, 48.20.450, 48.20.460, 48.30.010, 48.44.020, 48.44.050, 48.44.080, 48.46.030, 48.46.060(2), 48.46.200 and 48.46.243. WSR 98-04-005 (Matter No. R 97-3), § 284-43-130, filed 1/22/98, effective 2/22/98.]