



**Title:** IRO Reviewer Guidelines and Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM) Training  
**Review Type:** Medical Necessity / Experimental / Administrative, Plan Language  
**Dept. Email:** PeerReview@mcn.com  
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This guide sheet is designed to help you address Utilization and External Reviews. Please read the following regarding general expectations prior to proceeding with any review.

#### Conflict of Interest:

Please ensure you have no historical involvement with this case review.

You as the independent reviewer will be expected to decline this case if you have a material professional, familial, or financial conflict of interest regarding any of the following:

- Referring Entity
- Health benefits plan
- Consumer / plan member
- Any provider currently or previously involved in the case
- Facility at which the recommended treatment would be provided
- Developer or manufacturer of the principal drug device, procedure, or other therapy being recommended by the consumer

#### External Review & Internal (Utilization) Review:

Reviewers will be assigned External or Internal (initial, 1st level appeal, or 2nd level appeal) cases.

#### External Review:

External Reviews are state or federally mandated reviews performed by an Independent Review Organization (IRO). These clinical reviews are determinant in coverage disputes involving medical necessity, medical appropriateness, proven benefit (experimental/ investigational) and other issues dealing with medical judgments. External reviews are the final appeal (often the third appeal). (NAIRO.org)

- CLINICAL RATIONALE – A reviewer’s decision to approve or deny a service is based on consideration of:
  - Member’s medical records
  - Benefit book
  - Health plan provided clinical criteria
  - Reports from appropriate health care professionals and other documents submitted to Mitchell MCN by the:
    - Referring entity
    - Consumer/member
    - Attending provider
    - Scientific and medical literature
    - Current evidence based practice guidelines developed by the federal or state government, national or professional medical societies, boards and associations

#### Internal (Utilization) Review:

The first and second clinical reviews performed in conjunction with an initial and/or second appeal of a non-coverage decision based on medical judgment (medical necessity, medical appropriateness, experimental/investigational and other decisions based on medical judgment). (NAIRO.org)

- **CLINICAL RATIONALE** – A reviewer bases his/her decision to approve or deny a service is based on consideration of:
  - Member medical records
  - Benefit book
  - Medical criteria
  - Reports from appropriate health care professionals and other documents submitted to MCN by the:
    - Referring entity
    - Consumer/member
    - Attending provider
    - If applicable, internal reviews are performed on behalf of the health plan

Reviewers will be asked to determine coverage of a service based on Medical Necessity, Experimental/Investigational and/or Benefit and Contract Language.

Medical Necessity Review – MCN’s standard definition (Please note: you must consider a health plan’s criteria of medical necessity as appropriate): Medical Necessity shall mean health care services that a health care provider, exercising prudent clinical judgment, would provide to a patient for the purpose of evaluating, diagnosing or treating an illness, injury, disease or its symptoms and that are:

- In accordance with the generally accepted standards of medical practice
- Clinically appropriate, in terms of type, frequency, extent, site, and duration, and are considered effective for the patient’s illness, injury, or disease
- Not primarily for the convenience of the patient or healthcare provider, and are not more costly than an alternative service or sequence of services at least as likely to produce equivalent therapeutic or diagnostic results as to the diagnosis or treatment of that patient’s illness, injury, or disease

Experimental or Investigational issues shall also consider existing medical research and peer-reviewed literature regarding the proposed treatment with respect to effectiveness and efficacy. Key points to address include:

- Whether the recommended service has been approved by the Federal Food and Drug Administration for the condition
- A description of the indicators relevant to whether there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the recommended service is more likely than not to be more beneficial to the covered person than any available standard health care service. Also to be considered is whether the adverse risks of the recommended service would not be substantially increased over those of available standard health care services
- Whether medical or scientific evidence or evidence-based standards demonstrate that the expected benefits of the recommended service is more likely than not to be more beneficial to the covered person than any available standard health care service. Also to be considered is whether the adverse risks of the recommended

service would not be substantially increased over those of available standard health care services

Administrative and/ or legal issues (Benefit and Contract Language reviews) shall consider the following:

- Applicable health benefits plan contract
- Other relevant health benefits plan materials and documents
- Applicable state and federal law

External Reviewer Biographical Blurb:

External Reviews require a biographical blurb rather than signature block. We ask that you include a brief biographical statement (2-3 sentences) to include reference to board certification, active licensure, and relevant experience to the case.

Report Format:

- You will be asked to Uphold/Deny, Overturn/Approve, or Partially Overturn/Partially Approve the service or treatment under review
- Ensure all documents reviewed are listed in bullet point format
- Provide a case summary of the documents and the description of the appeal
- Provide your finding and principle reason for the decision. This is to include rationale and any evidence-based standards or coverage provisions that were relied on in making the decision.
- Any references used in the review. This is to include health benefits contract/plan language, evidence-based guidelines, and clinical / medical references

Recommended Medical, Scientific and Cost Effectiveness Evidence Resources:

1. Peer-reviewed scientific studies published in or accepted for publication by medical journals that meet nationally recognized requirements for scientific manuscripts and that submit most of their published articles for review by experts who are not part of the editorial staff
2. Peer-reviewed medical literature, including literature relating to therapies reviewed and approved by a qualified institutional review board, biomedical compendia and other medical literature that meet the criteria of the National Institutes of Health's Library of Medicine for indexing in Index Medicus (Medline) and Elsevier Science Ltd. for indexing in Excerpta Medicus (EMBASE); Medline and MEDLARS database Health Services Technology Assessment Research (HSTAR)
3. Medical journals recognized by the Secretary of Health and Human Services under Section 1861(t)(2) of the Federal Social Security Act;
4. The following standard reference compendia:
  - a. The American Hospital Formulary Service—Drug Information; Drug Facts and Comparisons
  - b. The Center for Drug Evaluation and Research History
  - c. The American Dental Association Accepted Dental Therapeutics; and
  - d. The United States Pharmacopoeia—Drug Information
5. Findings, studies or research conducted by or under auspices of federal government agencies and nationally recognized federal research institutes, including:
  - a. The Federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality;

- b. The National Institutes of Health;
  - c. The National Cancer Institute;
  - d. The National Academy of Sciences;
  - e. The Health Care Financing Administration
  - f. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services;
  - g. The Federal Food and Drug Administration; and
  - h. Any national Board recognized by the National Institutes of Health for the purpose of evaluating the medical value of health care services; or
6. Any other medical or scientific evidence that is comparable to the sources listed in paragraphs (1) through (5) above

#### Additional Sources for Evidence-Based Medicine:

- Milliman Care Guidelines
- InterQual Guidelines
- ACOEM Practice Guidelines; American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (Third Edition)
- ODG (Official Disability Guidelines), <http://www.disabilitydurations.com/>
- ASAM Patient Placement Criteria for the Treatment of Substance-Related Disorders. (Third Edition) American Society of Addiction Medicine, Inc. Chevy Chase Maryland 2001
- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. 5th edition, American Psychiatric Association, Washington, DC 2013. ISBN 978-0-89042-554-1 or 978-0-89042-555-8
- Practice Guidelines for the Treatment of Psychiatric Disorders Compendium 2006, American Psychiatric Association, Washington D.C., 1996. ISBN 978-0-89042-385-1.
- Haldeman S. Chapman- Smith D., Petersen DM Jr., “Guidelines for Chiropractic Quality Assurance and Practice Parameters: Proceedings of Mercy Center Consensus Conference,” Aspen, Gaithersburg MD, 1993. ISBN 0-8342-0375-8.
- Council on Chiropractic Practice; Clinical Practice Guideline No.1. Vertebra Subluxation in Chiropractic Practice. 1998. ISBN 0-9666598-0-5.
- Clinical Practice Guidelines Directory, American Medical Association, Chicago, 1999, ISBN 0-89970-955-9.
- Guide to Physical Therapist Practice 2nd Edition, American Physical Therapy Association, Alexandria, VA, 2001. ISBN 1-887759-85-9.
- Complete Global Service Data for Orthopedic Surgery 2012, 2 Volumes, American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, Rosemont, Illinois, 2012. ISBN 0892038594.
- United States Pharmacopeia- Drug Information (USPDI). (20th Edition United States)
- Pharmacopeial Convention, Rockville, MD, 2000.
  - Contains the FDA’s Orange Book, Approved Drug Products with Therapeutic Equivalence Evaluations. Has “special state supplements” for each state with the title: “Selected state laws pertaining to the practice of pharmacy in...” Updated bimonthly by: USP DI update. Published simultaneously with: USP DI Drug Information for the health care professional; and USP DI. Advice for the patient. [www.samford.edu/schools/pharmacy/dic/guides.htm](http://www.samford.edu/schools/pharmacy/dic/guides.htm)
- United States Pharmacopoeia Convention, United States Pharmacopoeia- Drug Information (USP DI) Oncology drug information, 1st Edition. 1997-98, Rockville,

MD Association of Community Cancer Centers, ISSN 1096-2808.

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/cgi>.

- United States Pharmacopoeial Convention, United States Pharmacopoeia- Drug Information (USP DI) for health care provider, 1999 USPC, Rockville MD ISSN: 0740-4174 (At Eccles Medical Library; QV740 A1 U8558d 1999 v.3)
- United States Pharmacopoeial Convention, USP DI Update, Rockville MD, 1999. ISSN 0730-1324.
- <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/cgi>
- American Hospital Formulary Service- Drug Information. Board of Directors of the American Society of Hospital Pharmacist, 2001 1998, Bethesda, MD ISBN 978-1585280186.
- Wallach, Jacques, Interpretation of Diagnostic Test, 7th edition, Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins 2000, ISBN 0-7817-1659-4
- Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists – Clinical Resources. London, England. <http://www.rcslt.org/>

Library of online clinical criteria references:

- [www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov) (U.S. health information resource site; Spanish and English)
- [www.merckmedicus.com/](http://www.merckmedicus.com/) (Merck Medicus Online). It includes access to Best Practice of Medicine Professional References, National Guidelines, Online copies of major textbooks in all specialties including Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine, Hurst's The Heart, Scott: Danforth's Obstetrics and Gynecology, Chapman's Orthopedic Surgery, The PDR.
- [www.current-reports.com](http://www.current-reports.com) (Current Reports)
- [www.pdr.net](http://www.pdr.net) (Online PDR)
- [www.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.nlm.nih.gov) (U.S. national Library of Medicine)
- [www.hih.gov](http://www.hih.gov) (U.S. National Institutes of Health)
- [www.clinicaltrials.gov](http://www.clinicaltrials.gov) (listing of clinical trials in the U.S.)
- [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) (U.S. Centers for Disease Control)
- [www.medscape.com](http://www.medscape.com) (health education and information)
- [www.ahcpr.gov](http://www.ahcpr.gov) (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality)
- <http://text.nlm.nih.gov> (Health Services Technology Assessment Text)
- [www.guideline.gov/](http://www.guideline.gov/) (National Guidelines Clearinghouse)
- [www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/factsheets/intlmedlars.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/factsheets/intlmedlars.html) (International MEDLAR Centers)
- [www.niddk.nih.gov/](http://www.niddk.nih.gov/) (National Institute of Diabetes & Digestive Kidney Diseases)

Specialty Societies

- [www.aaaai.org/professionals.stm](http://www.aaaai.org/professionals.stm) (American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Professionals Center)
- [www.aanem.net/](http://www.aanem.net/) (American Assoc. of Electrodiagnostic Medicine)
- [www.nccn.org](http://www.nccn.org) (National Comprehensive Cancer Network)
- [www.acr.org/dyna/?doc=departments/appropriateness\\_criteria/toc.htm](http://www.acr.org/dyna/?doc=departments/appropriateness_criteria/toc.htm) (American College of Radiology Appropriateness Criteria)
- [www.asbs.org/](http://www.asbs.org/) (American Society for Bariatric Surgery)
- [www.aace.com](http://www.aace.com) (American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists Clinical Guidelines Online Index)

- [www.entlink.net](http://www.entlink.net) (American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery Clinical Indicators Compendium)
- [www.plasticsurgery.org/](http://www.plasticsurgery.org/) (American Society of Plastic Surgeons Position Papers on Recommended Insurance Coverage Criteria)
- [www.nccn.org/clinical.asp](http://www.nccn.org/clinical.asp) (The National Comprehensive Cancer Network-Practice Guidelines in Oncology)
- [www.acc.org](http://www.acc.org) (American College of Cardiology- Clinical Statements/Guidelines)
- [www.acponline.org/sci-policy/guidelines/recent.htm](http://www.acponline.org/sci-policy/guidelines/recent.htm) (American College of Physicians list of Current Guidelines)
- [www.facs.org/ahp/pubs/2007physasstsurg.pdf](http://www.facs.org/ahp/pubs/2007physasstsurg.pdf) (Physicians as Assistants at Surgery: 2007 Study)
- [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org) (American Academy of Pediatrics)

#### Journals

- [www.nejm.org](http://www.nejm.org) (The New England Journal of Medicine)
- [www.jama.ama-assn.org](http://www.jama.ama-assn.org) (Journal of the American Medical Association)
- [www.thelancet.com](http://www.thelancet.com) (The Lancet)
- [www.current-reports.com](http://www.current-reports.com) (Current Reports)
- Provide your finding and principle reason for the decision. This is to include rationale and any evidence-based standards or coverage provisions that were relied on in making the decision
- Any references used in the review. This is to include health benefits contract/plan language, evidence-based guidelines, and clinical / medical references