

**MassHealth MCO Reponses
DME PA Policies
December 5, 2008**

Inquirer: Lois Aldrich (OLTC/DME Program) – 11/21/2008

Question/Topic:

A question was raised at a meeting with MassHealth program staff and DME providers. The question is whether or not MCOs are now required to authorize DME services for no longer than 3 months at a time. *"One of the providers at the meeting said that one MCO (BMCHP) says they are now only allowed to authorize for no longer than 3 months. Then the provider must submit another PA. They also said that this is the same practice as in MassHealth".* According to MassHealth program staff the latter is not the case – MassHealth allows PAs for greater duration if medically necessary.

Request made to MCOs to provide their Plan's policy regarding DME PA requests by 12/1/08.

12/5/2008 MCO Responses:

BMCHP	FCHP	NHP	Network Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BMCHP prior approves DME services and their duration dependent upon medical necessity and according to Plan policy which is based on internal medical policy, InterQual DME criteria and Plan physician review. ▪ Not knowing the specific DME services asked about, generalization on PA would be 3 months for some DME (capped rentals, beds, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FCHP does not only authorize DME for 3 months. ▪ There are some items such as hospital beds or wound vacs that are approved on a month to month basis because of the member's medical condition and the need for updated clinical to continue the approval. ▪ However, the majority of the items are approved on a rent to purchase basis or up to one year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For DME there is a 3 month default in NHP's system, QNXT, for authorizations, but NHP <i>does auths beyond this default when necessary.</i> ▪ For Purchasing DME it is a standard 3 month authorization. Note: More often than not, the authorization limit to a three month duration are because they represent a single purchase and not an ongoing service OR is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At Network Health, DMEs are authorized for a 6 month timespan with the exception of CPAP machines. CPAP machines are authorized for 3 months.

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<p>wheelchairs).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Special formulas and Enterals are included in the authorization for no longer than 3 months. Most other DME follow MassHealth Guidelines for approval authorization time period. ▪ If this question arose from Enteral/Special formula, BMCHP requires authorizations for no longer than 3 months, for the following reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cost ○ Changing of formulas if not tolerated by members ○ Member Eligibility ▪ This is BMCHP's current process. The Plan frequently reviews this to assure that BMCHP is monitoring this DME appropriately. BMCHP is 	<p>If truly depends on the item.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FCHP does not have a blanket rule that states only up to a 3 month approval before the provider must submit another PA request. 	<p>it done for a three month period as the provider's PA request does not specify any time frame or that have not indicated if the amount requested is a one time only or a monthly quantity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Other life-sustaining equipment that are ongoing (indefinite) rentals, such as ventilators, respiratory suction machines and electrical generators for same are typically given a 1 year authorization. ▪ For Home OXYGEN – NHP no longer requires PA. ▪ Ongoing supplies are authorized for 6 months then are reviewed again and if needed will process for continuation of these authorizations. ▪ Formulas for 1 year. 	

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<p>aware that MassHealth approves special formulas for 1 year. This has been part of the new enteral/special formula policy that was rolled out with MassHealth and the other MCOs on September 1, 2008. If it was communicated to the DME providers that MassHealth was changing their policy of review to 3 months, this may have been done in error.</p>			