

MEDICAL POLICY

Medical Policy Title	Ambulance: Land/Ground
Policy Number	10.01.07
Current Effective Date	March 19, 2026
Next Review Date	March 2027

Our medical policies are guides to evaluate technologies or services for medical necessity. Criteria are established through the assessment of evidence based, peer-reviewed scientific literature, and national professional guidelines. Federal and state law(s), regulatory mandates and the member's subscriber contract language are considered first in the determination of a covered service.

(Link to [Product Disclaimer](#))

POLICY STATEMENT(S)

- I. Emergency land/ground ambulance transportation is considered **medically appropriate** (when the New York State (NYS) mandate does not apply), when **ALL** of the following criteria are met:
 - A. The services must be provided by an ambulance service that is issued a certificate under the NYS Public Health Law;
 - B. The ambulance must have the necessary patient-care equipment and supplies;
 - C. The individual's condition must be such that any other form of transportation would be medically contraindicated; **and**
 - D. The individual is transported to the nearest hospital with the appropriate facilities for the treatment of the patient's illness or injury.
- II. Non-emergent ambulance services for medical transport are considered **medically appropriate** when **ALL** of the following criteria are met:
 - A. The services must be provided by an ambulance service that is issued a certificate under the NYS Public Health Law;
 - B. The ambulance must have the necessary patient-care equipment and supplies;
 - C. The individual's condition must be such that any other form of transportation would be medically contraindicated;
 - D. The provider of the specialized service is the nearest facility with the required capabilities; **and**
 - E. **One** of the following indications:
 1. From a non-participating hospital to a participating hospital;
 2. To a hospital that provides a higher level of care that was not available at the original hospital;
 3. When individual has been approved for interfacility transfer (CMP #11.01.18 Interfacility Transfer of a Registered Patient); **or**

Medical Policy: Ambulance: Land/Ground

Policy Number: 10.01.07

Page: 2 of 9

4. From an acute care facility to a sub-acute setting.

III. Elective or convenience ambulance transportation (e.g., patient/patient's family desire, transportation from one facility to another facility within the same health care system for capacity management) is considered **not medically necessary**.

RELATED POLICIES

Corporate Medical Policy

10.01.12 Emergency Care Services

11.01.06 Air Ambulance Services

11.01.18 Interfacility Transfer of a Registered Inpatient

Administrative Policy

54 Ambulance-Transport Service

POLICY GUIDELINE(S)

- I. When the NYS mandate does not apply to ambulance transportation, contractual distance restrictions may apply. Refer to the member's subscriber contract regarding specific limitations.
- II. The non-emergent medical transport of a bed-confined patient, when specialized medical services during transport are not necessary, is considered to be a non-ambulance transportation and is **ineligible for coverage** as non-ambulance transportation, such as ambulette, van or taxicab is generally excluded by contract.
- III. Transportation services utilizing vehicles that are not equipped and certified under the New York Public Health Law to provide emergency medical services (e.g., ambulette, van or taxicab) are **ineligible for coverage** as they do not provide medical care or monitoring during transportation.
- IV. Ambulance services for deceased members may be **eligible for coverage** if the patient is legally pronounced dead after the ambulance is called, but before pick-up or enroute to the hospital. These services are **ineligible for coverage** if the patient is pronounced dead before the ambulance is called.
- V. Prior authorization for interfacility transfer is contract-dependent, and, where a member's subscriber contract so requires, authorization must be obtained prior to transfer of the patient. Some members' subscriber contracts exclude coverage for the transfer of its members between health care facilities.
- VI. Accepting the transfer of a registered inpatient from another facility through the emergency department, when the patient is not in need of emergent services, does not negate the requirement for prior authorization of the transfer if the member contract requires prior authorization for inpatient admissions.

DESCRIPTION

Medical Policy: Ambulance: Land/Ground

Policy Number: 10.01.07

Page: 3 of 9

Ambulance services involve the assessment and administration of care to the ill or injured individual by specially trained personnel and transportation of the individual in specially designed and equipped vehicles within an appropriate, safe and monitored environment. The emergency medical personnel, ambulances, and equipment must follow New York State laws, codes, rules and regulations not addressed in this policy. Ambulance services are frequently the initial step in the chain of the delivery of medical care.

Ambulance and Medical Transport may involve:

- The emergency transportation of an individual to the nearest hospital with the appropriate facilities for the treatment of the individual's illness or injury; or
- The non-emergent medical transport of a registered hospital inpatient to another location to obtain medically necessary, specialized diagnostic or therapeutic services.

Ambulance Services: Emergent, Urgent or Non-Emergent Reasons

- I. An Emergency Condition is defined as services for a medical or behavioral condition that manifests itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity, including severe pain, such that a prudent layperson, possessing an average knowledge of medicine and health, could reasonably expect the absence of immediate medical attention to result in:
 - A. Placing the health of the person afflicted with such condition or, with respect to a pregnant woman, the health of the woman or her unborn child in serious jeopardy, or in the case of a behavioral condition, placing the health of such person or others in serious jeopardy;
 - B. Serious impairment to such person's bodily function;
 - C. Serious dysfunction of any body organ or part of such person; or
 - D. Serious disfigurement of such person.
- II. Urgent services are defined as services for a medical or behavioral condition that require immediate attention, although the condition may not be an emergency situation. An urgent care condition has the potential to become emergent in the absence of treatment.
- III. Non-emergent services are defined as services for a medical or behavioral condition that are not considered to be of an emergent or urgent nature (e.g., elective surgery).

SUPPORTIVE LITERATURE

Not Applicable

PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINE(S)

In an updated Joint Position Statement of the Recommended Essential Equipment for Basic Life Support and Advanced Life Support Ground Ambulances 2020 co-authored by National Association of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Physicians (NAEMSP)/American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)/ American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma (ACSCOT)/EMS for Children Innovation and Improvement Center (EIIC)/Emergency Nurses Association (ENA)/National Association of State EMS Officials (NASEMSO) and endorsed by National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians

Medical Policy: Ambulance: Land/Ground

Policy Number: 10.01.07

Page: 4 of 9

(NAEMT), Lyng et al (2021b) stated that the delivery of high-quality and effective EMS care is dependent on several factors, including but not limited to:

- Credentialed providers, who have demonstrated appropriate knowledge, ability, psychomotor skills, and critical thinking.
- Clinical protocols or guidelines supported by the best available scientific evidence.
- Equipment and supplies necessary to deliver appropriate care as indicated by clinical protocols/guidelines for patients of all ages.

The purpose of this statement is to review and revise the 2014 version of the joint position statement to include a review of equipment lists established by individual state/territory rules and statutes for all U.S. states and territories and to establish recommended equipment standards to build consistency across the EMS system of care and to facilitate advances in the delivery of quality and cost-effective EMS care. The statement also establishes that EMS agencies should include in their routine quality assurance practices efforts to assess that:

- Their EMS providers are outfitted with all necessary equipment for them to perform clinical care.
- All equipment and supplies undergo appropriate preventive maintenance and routine function checks.
- Malfunctioning or missing equipment issues are quickly addressed to preserve readiness to respond and provide patient care continuously.

The statement includes a list of required equipment for basic life support (BLS) Emergency Ground Ambulances and Advanced Life Support (ALS) Emergency Ground Ambulances, a list of optional equipment that should be used based on local needs and resources and a list of optional medications.

REGULATORY STATUS

The NYS Insurance Law mandates coverage for pre-hospital emergency services and land transportation provided by ambulance services certified under the NYSPublic Health Law. The mandate requires coverage of pre-hospital emergency services and ground ambulance transport when a prudent layperson, possessing an average knowledge of medicine and health, could reasonably expect the absence of such transportation to result in:

- Placing the health of the person afflicted with such condition (or with respect to a pregnant woman, placing the health of the woman or her unborn child), in serious jeopardy, or in the case of a behavioral condition, placing the health of such person or others in serious jeopardy;
- Serious impairment to such person's bodily function;
- Serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part of such person; or
- Serious disfigurement of such person.

The NYS mandate does not require coverage of air ambulance transportation and explicitly excludes ambulance transportation between hospitals or health care facilities.

The NYS mandate applies to all major medical or similar comprehensive-type contracts, including

Medical Policy: Ambulance: Land/Ground

Policy Number: 10.01.07

Page: 5 of 9

Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) contracts and Child Health Plus contracts.

CODE(S)

- Codes may not be covered under all circumstances.
- Code list may not be all inclusive (AMA and CMS code updates may occur more frequently than policy updates).
- (E/I)=Experimental/Investigational
- (NMN)=Not medically necessary/appropriate

CPT Codes

Code	Description
Not Applicable	

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HCPCS Codes

Code	Description
A0021	Ambulance service, outside state per mile, transport (Medicaid only)
A0080-A0130	Non-emergency transportation; ground vehicle (code range)
A0160-A0210	Non-emergency transportation (code range)
A0225	Ambulance service, neonatal transport, base rate, emergency transport, one way
A0380	BLS mileage (per mile)
A0382-A0384	BLS disposable supplies (code range)
A0390	ALS mileage (per mile)
A0392-A0398	ALS disposable supplies (code range)
A0420	Ambulance waiting time (ALS or BLS), one-half (1/2) hour increments
A0422	Ambulance (ALS or BLS) oxygen and oxygen supplies, life sustaining situation
A0424	Extra ambulance attendant, ground (ALS or BLS) or air (fixed or rotary winged)
A0425	Ground mileage, per statute mile
A0426	Ambulance service, ALS, non-emergency transport, level 1 (ALS 1)
A0427	Ambulance service, ALS, emergency transport, level 1 (ALS 1 – emergency)
A0428	Ambulance service, BLS, non-emergency transport (BLS)
A0429	Ambulance service, BLS, emergency transport (BLS, emergency)

Medical Policy: Ambulance: Land/Ground**Policy Number: 10.01.07****Page: 6 of 9**

Code	Description
A0432	Paramedic intercept, rural area, transport furnished by a volunteer ambulance company which is prohibited by state law from billing third-party payors
A0433	Advanced life support, level 2 (ALS2)
A0434	Specialty care transport (SCT)
A0888	Non-covered ambulance mileage, per mile (e.g., for miles traveled beyond closest appropriate facility)
A0998	Ambulance response and treatment, no transport
A0999	Unlisted ambulance services
S0207	Paramedic intercept, non-hospital-based ALS service (non-voluntary), non-transport
S0208	Paramedic intercept, hospital-based ALS service (non-voluntary), non-transport
S0215	Non-emergency transportation; mileage, per mile
T2001-T2007	Non-emergency transportation (code range)
T2049	Non-emergency transportation; stretcher van, mileage; per mile

ICD10 Codes

Code	Description
Multiple Codes	

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Medical Policy: Ambulance: Land/Ground

Policy Number: 10.01.07

Page: 7 of 9

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Medical Policy: Ambulance: Land/Ground

Policy Number: 10.01.07

Page: 8 of 9

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SEARCH TERMS

Not Applicable

CENTERS FOR MEDICARE AND MEDICAID SERVICES (CMS)

Ambulance Services are not addressed in National or Regional Medicare coverage determinations or policies.

Please refer to the Medicare Benefit Policy Manual, Chapter 10 - Ambulance Services. [Last updated 2025 Nov 26; accessed 2026 Jan 27] Available from: [Medicare Benefit Policy Manual](#)

PRODUCT DISCLAIMER

- Services are contract dependent; if a product does not cover a service, medical policy criteria do not apply.
- If a commercial product (including an Essential Plan or Child Health Plus product) covers a specific service, medical policy criteria apply to the benefit.
- If a Medicaid product covers a specific service, and there are no New York State Medicaid guidelines (eMedNY) criteria, medical policy criteria apply to the benefit.
- If a Medicare product (including Medicare HMO-Dual Special Needs Program (DSNP) product) covers a specific service, and there is no national or local Medicare coverage decision for the service, medical policy criteria apply to the benefit.
- If a Medicare HMO-Dual Special Needs Program (DSNP) product DOES NOT cover a specific service, please refer to the Medicaid Product coverage line.

POLICY HISTORY/REVISION

Committee Approval Dates

10/18/01, 02/28/02, 02/27/03, 04/22/04, 06/23/05, 06/22/06, 06/28/07, 06/26/08, 06/25/09, 06/24/10, 06/24/11, 06/28/12, 04/25/13, 04/24/14, 04/23/15, 04/28/16, 08/25/17, 04/26/18, 04/18/19, 04/23/20, 04/22/21, 04/21/22, 03/23/23, 03/21/24, 02/20/25, 03/19/26

Date

Summary of Changes

03/19/26

- Annual review. Removal of criteria for urgent ambulance transportation, and removal of criteria addressing cost effectiveness.

Medical Policy: Ambulance: Land/Ground

Policy Number: 10.01.07

Page: 9 of 9

02/20/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual review, policy intent unchanged
01/01/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summary of changes tracking implemented.
10/18/01	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Original effective date