


STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Med-QUEST Division
Medical Standards Branch
P. O. Box 700190
Kapolei, Hawaii 96709-0190

July 31, 2006

MEMORANDUM

QUEST MEMO
BEN-0603

TO: QUEST Medical Plans

FROM: Wesley Mun, Acting Med-QUEST Division Administrator 

SUBJECT: SPECIALTY CARE FOR QUEST MEMBERS UNDER AGE 21 WHO RESIDE ON A NEIGHBOR ISLAND

It has been brought to the attention of the Med-QUEST Division (MQD) that requests for physician pediatric specialty care on Oahu have been denied by QUEST plans and the fee-for-service (FFS) Medicaid program for aged, blind, and disabled (ABD) Medicaid recipients when an adult specialist is available on the neighbor island.

We have been told that the referring primary pediatrician/primary care provider (PCP) has determined that it is medically necessary for the child to receive pediatric specialty care when it is not available on the child's island of residence. Since the QUEST/Medicaid processes for getting in-state off-island pediatric specialty care are often very time consuming, the MQD, the QUEST plans and the Hawaii Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics have collaborated to develop specific criteria so that access to in-state off-island medically necessary pediatric specialty services for neighbor island residents can be expedited.

Pediatric Specialty Services on Oahu will be approved with documentation of the following:

- The child has a medical condition that requires surgical correction and the surgical results are optimized when the surgeon has training in performing the procedure on children and a working knowledge of the effects of the surgical intervention on growth and development. This assessment of the surgeon's pediatric skills will be made on a case by case basis by the PCP in collaboration with the QUEST plan/Medicaid.

- The child has a medical condition and the initial treatment of the condition requires pediatric medical subspecialty care--such as oncology, gastroenterology, neurology, cardiology, and endocrinology. This need for pediatric subspecialty care shall be made by the PCP on a case by case basis. Access to the pediatric subspecialty care will be covered by the QUEST plan/Medicaid until the subspecialist and PCP agree that subspecialty care is no longer needed &/or the care can be safely transitioned to the primary pediatrician/PCP.
- The child has received pediatric surgical or medical subspecialty care and requires follow-up and/or monitoring by the specialist. Both the primary pediatrician/PCP and the pediatric specialist agree that follow-up and/or monitoring by the pediatric specialist is medically necessary.

Pediatric Specialty Services on Oahu may not be approved without specific documentation in the following situation:

- The request does not clearly address why pediatric specialty care is being requested--examples, allergist visit for a non-specific mild to moderate skin rash or mild asthma, gastroenterology visit for assessment of colic in an otherwise healthy infant, dermatologist visit for simple eczema.
- The surgical procedure is straightforward, and has been performed by adult specialists on children on a routine basis during the course of his/her everyday practice. Also, the referral does not specify why a pediatric specialist is needed. Examples: hernia repair in a child two (2) years of age or older and tympanostomy with/without tube in a child 2 years of age or older.

Pediatric specialty services may be denied in the following situations:

- There is no medical reason for pediatric specialty services. The primary physician/PCP is submitting the request because the parent(s) desire(s) to go to Oahu for a family function or to accumulate mileage for a trip to Disneyland, etc.
- The child is stable and needs elective consultant or follow-up consultation involving a specific pediatric specialty and the evaluation and /or treatment of the condition can wait until the Oahu based pediatric specialist is seeing patients on that child's island of residence.

Coverage of air transportation of a mother/parent/guardian when he/she does not accompany the child:

When a child needs to be transferred to a hospital on Oahu by air ambulance and the mother/parent/guardian is not able to accompany the child, the QUEST plans and FFS Medicaid will cover ONE (1) round trip by commercial airline for the mother/parent/guardian and ground transportation if needed. The referring pediatrician/PCP shall ask the

mother/parent/guardian if she/he has family or friends who can provide meals, lodging, and/or ground transportation on Oahu. If lodging, meals, and/or ground transportation cannot be provided by family or friends, the referring physician may request meals, lodging, and/or ground transportation for the mother/parent/guardian.

PROCEDURES:

- The QUEST plans and the FFS Medicaid Program will instruct their staffs to approve in-state, off-island medical services in situations that meet the approval requirements listed above.
 1. If requested, the QUEST plans and the FFS Medicaid Program will provide air and ground transportation for the child under 18 years of age and for one adult guardian/parent. If the EPSDT eligible individual is over 18 years of age and can safely travel without assistance, an attendant is not necessary.
 2. A QUEST plan has the right to approve only pediatric specialists within its provider network. The pediatric specialist must be a Hawaii Medicaid provider to render services to recipients in the FFS Medicaid Program.
- If a decision cannot be made based on information received, the QUEST plans and the FFS Medicaid Program may ask the requesting primary pediatrician/PCP for additional information to support the medical need for in-state, off-island pediatric specialty care. The requesting provider may be informed that additional documentation is needed by phone, fax, email or regular mail.
- If upon receipt of additional information, an approval cannot be made, the staff who authorize in-state, off-island care will refer all documentation to the medical director of the QUEST plan or the FFS Medicaid Program.
- If the medical director denies the service, a written notice of denial must be sent to the child's parent/guardian and the requesting physician.
- The child's parent or guardian has the right to appeal any denials. For QUEST plans, the appeals should be made to the specific QUEST plan. For the FFS Medicaid Program, the parent or guardian should contact the child's Department of Human Services (DHS) worker.