Referrals for Out-of-State Medical Services

I. Policy

University Health Alliance (UHA) will reimburse for medical services received on the mainland when determined to be medically necessary and when the medical services meet all of the Criteria/Guidelines, Limitations/Exclusions and Administrative Guidelines below.

UHA’s participating provider network and service area is restricted to the State of Hawaii. UHA recognizes, however, that under certain circumstances members may require services from providers on the mainland that are medically necessary, and not available in Hawaii. When services need to be provided outside of Hawaii because they are not available in state, and a timely request for prior authorization is submitted for those services on the mainland, UHA will coordinate the service and try to contract with the mainland provider to minimize our members’ out-of-pocket expense, and to sustain the most safe, efficient and timely care under the most fiscally responsible circumstances. The purpose of this policy is to guide referring providers in the process of referrals for out-of-state medical services that are provided on the mainland. Emergent situations, out-of-state care for travelling members not for the purpose of seeking medical care, or services for members who reside out-of-state are not within the scope of this policy.

II. Criteria/Guidelines

UHA will reimburse for medically necessary services outside the state of Hawaii with prior authorization and subject to the following criteria and guidelines. As described in the Limitations/Exclusions, UHA’s Chief Medical Officer or Medical Director will make the final determination as to whether requested services are performed in Hawaii, and can be made available in Hawaii.

A. When requested medical services are medically necessary and not available in Hawaii, UHA will reimburse for a patient to receive medical services on the mainland within the following criteria/guidelines:

1. Notify UHA of any potential mainland referral by calling UHA Health Care Services (532-4006 or neighbor islands 1-800-458-4600) and discuss with a case manager or HCS Special Services Liaison You may also discuss the necessity of the referral directly with the UHA Chief Medical Officer or Medical Director.

   a. UHA will discuss mainland referrals with the member to make the member aware of the implications of receiving care outside of Hawaii

2. All out-of-state requested medical services that are medically necessary and not available in Hawaii require prior authorization.

   a. Two weeks advance notice is required for prior authorization to verify that the requested services meet UHA’s payment criteria which includes determining the service is medically necessary, and to make payment arrangements with the out-of-state provider. UHA will do its best to expedite review if the request is time sensitive. Genuine emergencies will be reviewed and acted upon within less than 24 hours.

3. UHA will require details about the services requested to determine medical necessity and that the requested services are not available in Hawaii. Failure to provide sufficient documentation will delay the review process and may result in denial for payment of services. The following
information is required to be included with documentation and should be submitted with the Prior Authorization forms:

a. Patient's condition/diagnosis that relates to the out-of-state medical service request, and any pertinent comorbidities. Pertinent notes and test results are required.

b. Detailed description of the medical service requested, to include mainland provider or facility that will provide the service. Contact information is required.

c. Specific information supporting why any related medical services that are available in Hawaii are not sufficient.

d. Name of a specialty physician(s) within the state of Hawaii that concur(s) that out-of-state services are necessary (notes required).

e. Any available current research that supports medical necessity for the out-of-state medical services if based on new or experimental/investigational technology or treatment. (Refer also to Clinical Trials Payment Policy and Emerging Technology Payment Policy)

4. UHA has contracted with First Health Network providers across the mainland to provide services to our members when out-of-state services are medically necessary and not available in Hawaii. UHA care managers can help you determine if there is a participating First Health Network provider on the mainland available who can provide the requested out-of-state services.

   a. Referring to a First Health Network provider results in a substantial savings for members, however the rates are almost always significantly higher than the UHA eligible charges and result in high copayments to your patient.

   b. UHA makes no guarantee that there is a First Health Network provider in every area.

   c. There are usually multiple providers involved in a particular service and there is no guarantee that all of these providers are participating with First Health Network. Example: Surgeon and facility may be First Health Network providers but pathologist and/or anesthesiologist may not be a First Health Network provider.

   d. First Health Network reimbursement does not apply to the following providers (not an inclusive list) UHA reserves the right to make changes to this list at any time. Refer to UHA’s website for an updated list):

      i. Cancer Treatment Centers of America
      ii. Mayo Health Systems Hospitals and Ancillary Facilities
      iii. MD Anderson Affiliates
      iv. Baylor Health in the state of Texas
      v. Scripps Hospitals and Ancillary Facilities in the state of California
      vi. Stanford Affiliates
      vii. Cedars Sinai
5. UHA has special agreements with preferred facilities for transplants (other than kidney and liver), congenital heart disease, and cancers that cannot be treated in Hawaii. Please contact UHA Health Care Services prior to making arrangements. These requests are still subject to UHA’s prior authorization requirements.

B. When requested medical services are medically necessary and are available in Hawaii the following applies:

1. If the Chief Medical Officer or Medical Director determines that the same, similar, or other appropriate alternative service can be done in Hawaii, the member, referring physician, and rendering mainland provider(s) will be notified that the service will be paid at UHA’s eligible charges and at the non-participating benefit level. A determination letter and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) constitutes notification. If given sufficient time (two weeks advanced notice), a call will be made to the member to explain the MOU.

2. The patient becomes responsible for the difference between the mainland providers’ billed charges and UHA’s reimbursement. This results in significant out-of-pocket expenses for the patient, which often results in a contentious situation that UHA hopes to avoid by making the provider and member aware of the financial consequences of these services. UHA asks that all providers please remain cognizant of the following:

   a. If medically necessary services are obtained out-of-state and are available in Hawaii, the patient is responsible for any charges above UHA’s eligible charges.

      i. The eligible charges shall reflect the most current UHA non-participating professional and facility fees.

      ii. If no UHA eligible charge exists, then UHA will determine the eligible charge based on what UHA pays providers for similar services in Hawaii.

      iii. If no similar services in Hawaii exist, then UHA may base the eligible charge on Medicare guidelines.

      iv. For implants, UHA requires the invoice and will reimburse invoice +10%.

   b. The member may wish to negotiate with the mainland provider to reduce the difference between UHA’s payment and the mainland provider’s billed charges, or find a provider who is willing to accept UHA’s eligible charges.

C. When a member is a student, family member, or a subscriber living or working temporarily out-of-state, for whom an elective surgery or treatment is being recommended, the Health Care Services department will review the request to determine if it is reasonable for the member to safely return to Hawaii to have the procedure or treatment preformed.

1. If it is reasonable for the member to return to Hawaii for care, but the member elects to have the service performed on the mainland, then the service will be reimbursed at UHA’s eligible charges and at the non-participating benefit level.

2. Examples include but are not limited to elective surgery such as varicose vein surgery and orthopedic procedures.

D. NOTE: This UHA payment policy is a guide to coverage, the need for prior authorization and other administrative directives. It is not meant to provide instruction in the practice of medicine and it should not deter a provider from expressing his/her judgment.
Even though this payment policy may indicate that a particular service or supply is considered covered, specific provider contract terms and/or member individual benefit plans may apply, and this policy is not a guarantee of payment. UHA reserves the right to apply this payment policy to all UHA companies and subsidiaries.

UHA understands that opinions about and approaches to clinical problems may vary. Questions concerning medical necessity (see Hawaii Revised Statutes §432E-1.4) are welcome. A provider may request that UHA reconsider the application of the medical necessity criteria in light of any supporting documentation.

### III. Limitations/Exclusions

A. UHA’s Chief Medical Officer or Medical Director will make the final determination as to whether requested medical services are performed in Hawaii and can be made available in Hawaii.

1. The Chief Medical Officer or Medical Director will query Hawaii-based specialists who are familiar with the proposed services(s) to see if the service or clinically similar services are performed and available in state.

2. In cases where the determination is unclear, or where the requesting provider or member disputes the decision, the case will be referred to an Independent Review Organization (IRO) for determination. If decision of the IRO is in dispute, the provider or member may appeal.

### IV. Administrative Guidelines

A. Prior authorization is required.

1. Two weeks advance notice is required for prior authorization to verify that the requested medical services meet UHA payment criteria and are medically necessary, and to make payment arrangements with the out-of-state mainland provider.

2. Approval for retrospective prior authorizations in non-emergent situations cannot be relied upon and may result in significant expenses for your patient. UHA requests you make every effort to avoid this situation by obtaining prior authorization for your patient.

3. To request prior authorization, please go to UHA’s website [https://uhahealth.com/page/prior-authorization-forms](https://uhahealth.com/page/prior-authorization-forms) and submit via online.

### V. Policy History

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