

HEALTH CARE BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN OF VIETNAM VETERANS**CHAPTER: 2****SECTION: 2****TITLE: GENERAL MEDICAL BENEFITS**

AUTHORITY: 38 CFR 17.900 and 17.901

I. DEFINITIONS

A. Medical necessity is established when it can be shown through medical evidence and/or medical opinion that failure to receive the treatment, service, or supply will result in degradation of the beneficiary's health.

B. Inpatient service includes the care, treatment, and services furnished to an individual who has been admitted to a hospital or other institutional provider as a patient.

C. Outpatient service includes the care, treatment, and services furnished to an individual at a hospital or clinic without being admitted.

D. Refereed medical literature refers to an academic authority that examines and evaluates an article, clinical study, etc. with regard to its fitness for publication.

II. POLICY

A. In general, most inpatient and outpatient health care services and supplies that are medically or psychologically necessary and appropriate for the treatment of the covered medical condition(s) and associated complications are covered.

B. Associated medical conditions. The following conditions are always associated with spina bifida.

1. Conditions: Neurological Disorders:

a.. Arnold-Chiari malformation (a congenital anomaly in which two parts of the brain, the brainstem and the cerebellum are longer than normal and protrude down into the spinal canal);

b. Hydrocephalus (to include the following secondary conditions);

(1) Blindness and

(2) Seizure disorder.

cord); and

- c. Shunt infection;
- d. Shunt malfunction;
- e. Syringomyelia (a disorder in which a cyst forms with the spinal

- f. Tethered spinal cord.

2. Conditions: Neuromuscular Disorders:

- a. Decubitus ulcers;
- b. Foot deformities;
- c. Hip dislocation;
- d. Kyphosis;
- e. Lordosis;
- f. Paraplegia;
- g. Quadriplegia; and
- h. Scoliosis.

3. Conditions: Urinary Disorders:

- a. Kidney disease;
- b. Neurogenic bladder;
- c. Solitary kidney; and
- d. Urinary tract infection.

4. Conditions: Other Related Disorders:

- a. Latex allergy and
- b. Neurogenic bowel.

C. Frequently associated medical conditions. The following conditions are frequently associated with spina bifida. Medical documentation, which establishes a relationship to spina bifida, is required.

1. Conditions: Cardiovascular Disorder.
2. Conditions: Cranio-Facial Disorders:
 - a. Cleft lip; and
 - b. Cleft palate.
3. Conditions: Eye Disorders to include Strabismus.
4. Conditions: Neuromuscular Disorders:
 - a. Arthritis;
 - b. Balance disorder;
 - c. Chronic pain;
 - d. Dislocated joints;
 - e. Limb deformity;
 - f. Osteomyelitis; and
 - g. Respiratory disorder.
5. Conditions: Psychological/Social Disorders:
 - a. Anxiety disorder;
 - b. Attention deficit disorder;
 - c. Central auditory processing disorder;
 - d. Depression;
 - e. Hearing disabilities;
 - f. Learning disabilities; and
 - g. Mental retardation.

6. Conditions: Other Related Disorders:

- a. Immunological disorders (other than latex allergies) and
- b. Diabetes disorders.

D. Some services require preauthorization (see [Chapter 2, Section 1, Preauthorization](#)).

III. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A. The following reliable evidence is used in determining if a device, medical treatment, or procedure has moved from the status of experimental/investigational (unproven) to the position of nationally accepted medical practice:

1. Well controlled studies of clinically meaningful endpoints, published in refereed medical literature.
2. Published formal technology assessments.
3. The published reports of national professional medical associations.
4. Published national medical policy organization positions.
5. The published reports of national expert opinion organizations.

B. With respect to clinical studies, only those reports and articles containing scientifically valid data and published in refereed medical and scientific literature shall be considered as meeting the requirements of reliable evidence. Specifically not included in the meaning of reliable evidence are reports, articles, or statements by providers or groups of providers containing only abstracts, anecdotal evidence, or personal professional opinions. The fact that a provider or a number of providers have elected to adopt a device, medical treatment, or procedure as their personal treatment or procedure of choice or standard of practice is not sufficient justification to extend coverage for a service or supply.

C. Medical services and supplies prescribed for beneficiaries under these programs are covered when it can be established that the same service or supply is available through the VA Medical Centers for treatment of a veteran's service-connected condition.

IV. EXCLUSIONS

- A. Services, treatment, and supplies unrelated to the covered conditions.

B. Services, treatment, and supplies provided as part of a grant, study, or research.

C. Services, treatment, and supplies considered experimental or investigational (unproven).

D. Drugs not approved by the Food and Drug Administration for commercial marketing.

E. Services, treatment, procedures or supplies for which the beneficiary has no legal obligation to pay, such as services obtained at a health fair.

F. Services, treatment, and supplies provided outside the scope of the provider's license or certification.

G. Services, treatment, and supplies rendered by providers suspended or sanctioned by a federal agency.

H. Treatment, services, and supplies that are determined not medically necessary or appropriate.

I. Routine telephone calls from a physician to a patient and from a patient to a physician.

END OF POLICY