

8 Urgent Care & Hospitalization

URGENT CARE

Urgent Care is characterized as service received for an unexpected illness or injury that is not life-threatening but requires immediate medical care that cannot be postponed. An urgent situation requires prompt medical attention to avoid complications and unnecessary suffering or severe pain, such as a high fever.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY (NEW YORK)

A medical or behavioral condition, of sudden onset, that manifests itself by symptoms of sufficient severity (including severe pain), that a prudent layperson, possessing an average knowledge of medicine and health, could reasonably expect the absence of immediate medical attention to result in

- placing the health of the person afflicted with such condition 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 functions;
- serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part of such person; or
- serious disfigurement of such person.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY (NEW JERSEY)

A medical condition manifesting itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity including, but not limited to; severe pain, psychiatric disturbances and/or symptoms of substance abuse such that a prudent layperson, who possesses an average knowledge of health and medicine, could reasonably expect the absence of immediate

attention to result in placing the health of the individual (or with respect to a pregnant woman, the health of the woman or her unborn child) in serious jeopardy; serious impairment to bodily functions; or serious dysfunction of a bodily organ or part. With respect to a pregnant woman who is having contractions, an emergency exists where there is inadequate time to effect a safe transfer to another hospital before delivery, or the transfer may pose a threat to the health or safety of the woman or the unborn child.

EMERGENCY ADMISSIONS REVIEW

Empire requires notification of all inpatient emergency admissions per the terms of your contract, typically within 48 hours of the admission. After-hours calls are handled through our 24-hour Nurse Call Center. If a PCP, treating practitioner or hospital calls Medical Management during non-business hours, an option for notification of emergency admissions will be provided.

For HMO patients admitted to a participating facility, Medical Management will conduct a medical review only from the date of the notification forward, if the patient is still in the hospital. The claim will be subject to decreased payment for the days prior to notification. If the HMO patient has already been discharged at the time of notification, Medical Management will not review the admission and the claim may be subject to decreased payment for lack of notification.

For PPO patients admitted to a participating facility, if Medical Management is not notified within the required time frames, Empire will review the days prior to the notification, and may reduce payments for the days of service prior to the date of notice for the medically necessary condition.

The facility will be provided with grievance rights and information for any claims denials or reductions for lack of notification.

INPATIENT CARE

A person receives inpatient care while spending the night in a hospital or other facility as a registered patient. For full coverage, the patient must meet the following conditions:

- The care is medically necessary and is a covered service under the member's benefit contract.
- For HMO members, a network facility must deliver the care. The only exceptions are in an emergency or if the attending physician decides that care in a hospital outside our network is more appropriate and prior approval from Medical Management has been obtained. PPO members may receive care from a network hospital provider, or for a higher out-of-pocket cost (in non-emergencies) by an out-of-network hospital provider.
- For HMO members, the facility or the physician must precertify the member's admission in advance through the Medical Management Program, except in an emergency. Empire does not require precertification of emergency room service. For PPO members, the precertification may be handled by the members/patients themselves, unless they have authorized the Provider to do so.
- The facility (or other network provider) coordinates the patient's care while he/she is hospitalized.

DISCHARGE PLANNING AND CONCURRENT REVIEW

Once Empire has approved an initial length of stay, the facility must contact Medical Management for approval of any additional days. It is the facility's responsibility to provide all information according to the time frame. An Empire nurse may call the Utilization Review Department and/or PCP or attending physician upon reviewing the case to request additional clinical information. Our nurse's goal is to support a treatment plan that provides appropriate care in a cost-effective manner and results in discharge from the hospital at the appropriate point in the patient's treatment.