

# MEDICAL POLICY



<b>SUBJECT: MEDICAL/ NON-SURGICAL WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS and SERVICES</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE: 07/02/99</b> <b>REVISED DATE: 02/28/02, 04/24/03, 05/27/04, 04/28/05, 04/27/06, 04/26/07, 08/23/07, 08/28/08, 08/25/16</b> <b>(ARCHIVED DATE: 08/27/09,</b> <b>EDITED DATE: 08/26/10, 08/25/11, 08/23/12, 08/22/13, 08/28/14, 08/27/15)</b>
<b>POLICY NUMBER: 11.01.01</b> <b>CATEGORY: Contract Clarification</b>	<b>PAGE: 1 OF: 5</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>If a product excludes coverage for a service, it is not covered, and medical policy criteria do not apply.</i></li><li>• <i>If a commercial product, including an Essential Plan product, covers a specific service, medical policy criteria apply to the benefit.</i></li><li>• <i>If a Medicare 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.</i></li></ul>	

## POLICY STATEMENT:

### I. Commercial weight management programs:

Commercial weight management programs and related services, including physician and other qualified healthcare professional (e.g., physical therapists, occupational therapists) evaluations and supervision by program personnel, laboratory services, machine tests (e.g., indirect calorimetry), and foodstuffs, are generally excluded by contract and are, therefore, **ineligible for coverage**.

Examples of commercial weight management programs include, but are not limited to: Jenny Craig, LA Weight Loss, Medifast, Nutrisystems, Optifast, and Weight Watchers.

### II. Intensive/high-intensity lifestyle counseling programs:

Based on our criteria and review of the peer-reviewed literature, a Health Plan approved intensive lifestyle counseling program, provided by an appropriately licensed provider, to promote a healthful diet and physical activity in adults age 18 years and older, is **medically appropriate** when the following criteria are met:

- A. The patient has known coronary artery disease (CAD) or diabetes; OR
- B. The patient has a body mass index (BMI) greater than or equal to 25 kg/m<sup>2</sup> and at least one coronary artery disease (CAD) risk factor, such as:
  1. pre-diabetes,
  2. hypertension,
  3. hyperlipidemia, dyslipidemia: defined as total cholesterol greater than 200 mg/dL, LDL cholesterol greater than 130 mg/dL, HDL cholesterol less than 40 mg/dL, and/or triglycerides greater than 150 mg/dL),
  4. metabolic syndrome: defined as 3 or more of the following risk factors:
    - a. waist circumference greater than or equal to 35 inches in women or 40 inches in men,
    - b. triglyceride level greater than or equal to 150 mg/dL, HDL cholesterol less than 50 mg/dL in women or 40 mg/dL for men,
    - c. blood pressure greater than or equal to 130/85 mmHg, and/or
    - d. fasting blood glucose greater than or equal to 100 mg/dL; or
  5. is a current smoker;

AND

- C. The patient is able to tolerate a healthy diet and does not require a controlled/specialized diet (e.g., kidney disease); and
- D. The patient is able to tolerate physical activity and does not have specific physical activity limitations for health reasons (e.g., cardiac or physiotherapy rehabilitation patients); and
- E. The patient is competent and alert and exhibits motivation and a readiness for change in their lifestyle. Readiness for change is measured utilizing standardized instruments; such as the University of Rhode Island Change Assessment scale (URICA), the S-Weight and P-Weight questionnaires, or the Decisional Balance Inventory (DBI).

*Proprietary Information of Excellus Health Plan, Inc.*

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*Refer to Corporate Medical Policy #1.01.49 regarding Telemedicine and Telehealth Services.*

*Refer to Corporate Medical Policy # 8.01.18 regarding Nutritional Therapy.*

*Refer to the Corporate Pharmacy Management Drug Policy #Pharmacy-03 regarding Anorexiant.*

**POLICY GUIDELINES:**

Intensive lifestyle counseling programs must be rendered by providers with the appropriate knowledge and training (such as physicians, registered professional nurses, nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, certified dieticians, and certified nutritionists) who have an unrestricted New York State license and are credentialed by the Health Plan; in order for services to be considered for coverage.

**DESCRIPTION:**

Overweight and obesity are chronic diseases and major health problems in the United States. A significant number of Americans are either overweight or obese.

Medical/non-surgical weight management programs and related services are designed to help people lose weight. Services provided by medical/non-surgical weight management programs include, but are not limited to:

- I. Medical exams (often on a weekly basis),
- II. Laboratory testing,
- III. Machine tests,
- IV. Nutritional counseling, and
- V. Foodstuffs.

Commercial weight management programs that target primarily diet and exercise have been proven effective in treating obesity and produce an average weight loss of 18-20 pounds in 6 months. However, long-term weight loss is generally not sustainable with many people successfully losing weight, only to regain it within 5 years.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends offering or referring adults who are overweight or obese and have additional cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk factors to intensive behavioral counseling interventions to promote a healthful diet and physical activity for CVD prevention. The recommendation applies to adults aged 18 years and older in primary care settings who are overweight or obese and have known CVD risk factors (hypertension, dyslipidemia, impaired fasting glucose, or metabolic syndrome).

Intensive counseling programs for obesity, also known as intensive lifestyle intervention (ILI) programs, include multiple behavioral management activities, in individual and group sessions, and include the following:

- I. Setting weight-loss goals,
- II. Dietary assessment and planning to improve diet,
- III. Physical activity assessment and counseling with physical activity sessions,
- IV. Identifying and overcoming barriers,
- V. Active use of self-monitoring,
- VI. Counseling and behavioral therapy to promote sustained weight loss through diet and exercise (e.g., problem solving, stress management), and
- VII. Strategies to maintain lifestyle changes.

The USPSTF recommendation states on average high intensity programs deliver greater than 360 minutes of patient contact over an average of 16 contacts in 12 months. The recommendation is currently undergoing an evidence review for update.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Diabetes Association (ADA) support similar type interventions for the prevention of diabetes.

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**CODES:**     Number            Description

**Eligibility for reimbursement is based upon the benefits set forth in the member's subscriber contract.**

Codes may not be all inclusive as the AMA and CMS code updates may occur more frequently than policy updates.

**CPT:**            0403T            Preventive behavior change, intensive program of prevention of diabetes using a standardized diabetes prevention program curriculum, provided to individuals in a group setting, minimum 60 minutes, per day

94690            Oxygen uptake, expired gas analysis; rest, indirect

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**HCPCS:**        G0447            Face-to-face behavioral counseling for obesity, 15 minutes

G0473            Face-to-face behavioral counseling for obesity, group (2-10), 30 minutes

S9449            Weight management classes, non-physician provider, per session

**ICD9:**           278.00            Obesity, unspecified

278.01            Morbid obesity

278.02            Overweight

278.03            Obesity hypoventilation syndrome

V85.21-V85.45   Body mass index 25.0 and over, adult (code range)

**ICD10:**        E66.01-E66.9    Overweight and obesity (code range)

Z68.25-Z68.45   Body mass index [BMI] 25.0 or greater, adult (code range)

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\*key article

**KEY WORDS:**

Intensive / high intensity lifestyle counseling program, Medical weight loss, Non-surgical weight loss, Weight loss program.

## CMS COVERAGE FOR MEDICARE PRODUCT MEMBERS

There is currently a National Coverage Determination (NCD) for the Treatment of Obesity and a NCD and Decision Memo for Intensive Behavioral Therapy for Obesity. Please refer to the following websites for Medicare Members:

NCD for Treatment of Obesity: <http://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/details/ncd-details.aspx?NCDId=38&ncdver=3&CoverageSelection=Both&ArticleType=All&PolicyType=Final&s=New+York++Upstate&KeyWord=obesity&KeyWordLookUp=Title&KeyWordLookUp=Title&KeyWordSearchType=And&KeyWordSearchType=And&bc=gAAAABAAAA&>.

NCD for Intensive Behavioral Therapy for Obesity: <https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/details/ncd-details.aspx?NCDId=353&ncdver=1&CoverageSelection=Both&ArticleType=All&PolicyType=Final&s=New+York++Entire+State&KeyWord=Intensive+Behavioral+Therapy&KeyWordLookUp=Title&KeyWordSearchType=And&bc=gAAAABAAAAAAA%3d%3d&>.

Decision Memo for Intensive Behavioral Therapy for Obesity: <https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/details/nca-decision-memo.aspx?&NcaName=Intensive%20Behavioral%20Therapy%20for%20Obesity&bc=ACAAAAAIAAA&NCAId=253&>.