



CLINICAL GUIDELINES

Chiropractic Services Guidelines

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EviCore
By **EVERNORTH**

EviCore healthcare Clinical Decision Support Tool Diagnostic Strategies: This tool addresses common symptoms and symptom complexes. Requests for individuals with atypical symptoms or clinical presentations that are not specifically addressed will require physician review. Consultation with the referring physician, specialist and/or individual's Primary Care Physician (PCP) may provide additional insight.

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Table of Contents

Guideline	Page
Criteria for the Provision of Chiropractic Services (CHIRO-1.0)	3
Definitions (CHIRO-1.1)	4
Criteria to Determine Medical Necessity for Chiropractic Services (CHIRO-1.2)	6
Procedure Codes	11
Benefits, Coverage Policies, and Eligibility (CHIRO-1.3)	17
Clinical Considerations (CHIRO-2.0)	18
Standardized Assessments (CHIRO-2.1)	19
Mental Health Considerations (CHIRO-2.2)	20
References (CHIRO)	21
References (CHIRO)	22

Criteria for the Provision of Chiropractic Services (CHIRO-1.0)

Guideline	Page
Definitions (CHIRO-1.1).....	4
Criteria to Determine Medical Necessity for Chiropractic Services (CHIRO-1.2)	6
Procedure Codes.....	11
Benefits, Coverage Policies, and Eligibility (CHIRO-1.3).....	17

Definitions (CHIRO-1.1)

CHIRO.1.1.A
v1.0.2024

Activities of Daily Living

- Activities of Daily Living include Basic Activities of Daily Living and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living.
 - **Basic Activities of Daily Living** are oriented towards taking care of one's own physical needs. These activities include walking, changing positions, dressing, and personal hygiene.
 - **Instrumental Activities of Daily Living** are more complex and support independent living within the home and community. These activities may include driving, housecleaning, meal preparation, care for others, child rearing, and shopping.

Chiropractic Services

- Chiropractic Services are those within the scope of a licensed chiropractor in the applicable jurisdiction. These may include the following:
 - Evaluation and management services
 - Chiropractic manipulative treatment
 - Physical medicine and rehabilitation treatments

Generally Accepted Standards of Practice

- Generally Accepted Standards of Practice are widely-accepted clinical concepts and practices based on high quality scientific evidence published in the peer-reviewed literature and/or evidence-based guidelines generally recognized by the relevant healthcare community.

Maintenance Chiropractic Services

- Maintenance Chiropractic Services are those that are performed to maintain the individual's current condition or to prevent or slow deterioration of the individual's condition.

Minimal Clinically Important Difference (MCID)

- Minimal Clinically Important Difference (MCID) is the smallest change in the score of a standardized assessment tool that is identified to be beneficial. The MCID is a statistical value established in published, peer-reviewed research.

Minimum Detectable Change (MDC)

- Minimum Detectable Change (MDC) is a change in the score of a standardized assessment tool that is greater than measurement error. The MDC is a statistical value established in published, peer-reviewed research.

Procedure Codes

- Procedure Codes are standardized alphanumeric identifiers that are used to report procedures and services rendered by a healthcare professional. These include Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) codes and Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) Level II codes.

Preventive Chiropractic Services

- Preventive Chiropractic Services include management of an asymptomatic or stable condition. This type of care is considered **not medically necessary**.

Criteria to Determine Medical Necessity for Chiropractic Services (CHIRO-1.2)

CHIRO.1.2.A
v1.0.2024

General Medical Necessity Review Criteria

The following criteria apply to the medical necessity review of all Chiropractic Services. Chiropractic Services considered **medically necessary** are those that are reasonable and necessary, based on Generally Accepted Standards of Practice, for the evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of a condition that is neuromusculoskeletal in origin to restore lost function resulting from an injury or illness.

The following Chiropractic Services are considered **not medically necessary**:

- Maintenance Chiropractic Services or Preventive Chiropractic Services as defined in **Definitions (CHIRO-1.1)**
- Treatment of disorders that are non-neuromusculoskeletal in origin (e.g. systemic, visceral, central nervous system, or infectious conditions)
- Treatment that does not have a direct therapeutic relationship to the region of complaint
- Chiropractic Services provided for individuals without quantified deficits in the ability to perform Activities of Daily Living that necessitate care based on Generally Accepted Standards of Practice as defined in **Definitions (CHIRO-1.1)**.
 - **Note:** See **Standardized Assessments (CHIRO-2.1)** for a list of functional measures established by research as valid for use with musculoskeletal conditions.
- Chiropractic Services that are not expected to result in significant, measurable, progressive improvement in the ability to perform Activities of Daily Living within a reasonable and generally predictable period of time based on Generally Accepted Standards of Practice as defined in **Definitions (CHIRO-1.1)**
- Chiropractic Services related to recreational activities or sport-specific performance in the absence of quantified deficits in the ability to perform Activities of Daily Living based on Generally Accepted Standards of Practice as defined in **Definitions (CHIRO-1.1)**
- Chiropractic Services performed at a frequency, duration, or quantity that exceeds the amount of Chiropractic Services considered medically necessary for the individual's condition based on:
 - The severity of the clinical findings
 - The presence or absence of complicating factors
 - The natural history of the condition

- The expectation for progressive improvement in the ability to perform Activities of Daily Living
- Generally Accepted Standards of Practice as defined in **Definitions (CHIRO-1.1)**
- Chiropractic Services that are performed in the presence of signs and/or symptoms that suggest life or limb threatening conditions and require additional evaluation, immediate referral, or medical comanagement prior to treatment based on Generally Accepted Standards of Practice as defined in **Definitions (CHIRO-1.1)**. These include findings that are likely to reflect a serious underlying condition such as:
 - Aneurysm or dissection
 - Cancer
 - Cauda equina syndrome
 - Fracture
 - Infection
 - Progressive neurologic conditions
 - Suicidal ideation (See **Mental Health Considerations [CHIRO-2.2]**)
- Chiropractic Services that replace or delay other medically necessary care based on Generally Accepted Standards of Practice as defined in **Definitions (CHIRO-1.1)**.
- Requests for Continuation of Treatment (after the initial request) that do not include current information to demonstrate that **ANY** of the following criteria have been met:
 - Quantified measures of function indicate significant improvement in the ability to perform Activities of Daily Living attributable to recent Chiropractic Services for the condition. A significant response may be demonstrated through **ANY** of the following:
 - An improvement of equal or greater value than an established MCID (as defined in **Definitions [CHIRO-1.1]**) on a standardized assessment for the individual's condition
 - An improvement of equal or greater value than an established MDC (as defined in **Definitions [CHIRO-1.1]**) on a standardized assessment for the individual's condition
 - Significant and quantified improvement in the ability to perform Activities of Daily Living as defined in **Definitions (CHIRO-1.1)**
 - Following an exacerbation, Chiropractic Services are expected to result in a return to the pre-exacerbation ability to perform Activities of Daily Living. Exacerbations occur when previously improved functional deficits recur following a plateau in the ability to perform Activities of Daily Living. This results in a significant decline in the ability to perform Activities of Daily Living when compared to the pre-exacerbation levels of function. A significant decline must be quantified.
- Chiropractic Services rendered when the complexity of the individual's condition does not require the clinical judgment and knowledge of a licensed chiropractor

- The submitted clinical information does not establish the individual's current condition and medical necessity for Chiropractic Services based on Generally Accepted Standards of Practice as defined in **Definitions (CHIRO-1.1)**
- For Medicare programs, the submitted information does not demonstrate that Chiropractic Services are in the form of manual manipulation of the spine to correct a subluxation of the spine as demonstrated by x-ray or physical examination.
- When post-service claim reviews are allowed and the submitted information does not support that the requested Chiropractic Services were performed

Procedure Code Level Medical Necessity Review Criteria

The following criteria apply to services for which eviCore performs claims-based, post-service review for individual Procedure Codes for specific health plans. For these reviews, the determination of medical necessity for chiropractic manipulative treatment (CMT), evaluation and management (E/M) services, modalities, therapeutic procedures, and other Chiropractic Services is made on an individual basis.

In addition to the criteria listed above for all Chiropractic Services, these individual procedures are only considered **medically necessary** when the documentation demonstrates that **ALL** of the following criteria are met:

- The documentation reflects that the service described by the Procedure Code was performed on the submitted date of service.
 - The documented service fulfills the minimum requirements of the description of the Procedure Code that is in effect on the date of service the procedure was performed.
 - The most specific and most comprehensive Procedure Code available is used to describe the service.
 - When there is no specific Procedure Code to describe the service, it is reported using the appropriate unlisted Procedure Code. In order to evaluate the medical necessity of any service represented by an unlisted Procedure Code, the records must describe the nature, extent, and need for the procedure as well as a description of the time, effort and equipment necessary to provide the service.
- The documentation supports the medical necessity and performance of **ALL** units billed.
 - For time-based procedures other than E/M services, the time includes the medically necessary face-to-face time spent by the provider performing the service with the patient.
 - A unit is reached when the mid-point is passed. For example, a fifteen-minute timed therapeutic procedure is performed when the provider spends face-to-face time with the individual for eight minutes, thus surpassing the mid-point between zero and fifteen minutes.
 - Multiple units of one or more medically necessary time-based procedure(s) may be supported on the same date of service based on the aggregate amount of time spent performing the procedure(s). For example, two units may be billed if twenty-three minutes is spent performing a fifteen-minute

- timed code, since twenty-three minutes is greater than the midpoint between fifteen minutes and thirty minutes.
- More than one unit is considered **not medically necessary** per date of service for supervised modalities that do not require direct (one-on-one) patient contact.
 - For E/M services, the documentation supports the medical necessity for the type and level of service based time or medical decision making.
 - Time for these services includes the total time spent performing medically necessary E/M service components on the date of the encounter. The medically necessary E/M time does not include travel time, time spent performing general education that is not required for the management of a specific patient, or time spent performing other services that are reported separately.
 - **ALL** components of medical decision making must be considered **medically necessary** to establish a diagnosis, assess the status of the condition, or select treatment options.
 - A new patient is one who has not received any professional services within the past three years from the same provider or another provider of the same specialty and subspecialty in the group practice.
 - For CMT, the level of the billed service must reflect the number of regions receiving medically necessary chiropractic manipulation.
 - The spinal CMT codes reflect the number of spinal regions treated on a single date. There are five spinal CMT regions:
 - Cervical (includes atlanto-occipital joint)
 - Thoracic region (includes costovertebral and costotransverse joints)
 - Lumbar
 - Sacral
 - Pelvic (sacro-iliac joint)
 - The single extraspinal CMT code includes all extraspinal regions treated on that service date. There are five extraspinal regions:
 - Head (including temporomandibular joint, excluding atlanto-occipital)
 - Lower extremities
 - Upper extremities
 - Rib cage (excluding costotransverse and costovertebral joints)
 - Abdomen
 - The service represented by each Procedure Code is separate and distinct from other Chiropractic Services on that date and is performed for a unique purpose.
 - Duplication of services is considered **not medically necessary**. For example, similar or overlapping heat modalities (hot packs, paraffin, whirlpool, etc.) are considered **not medically necessary** during the same encounter unless the documentation identifies exceptional circumstances that support multiple heat modalities based on Generally Accepted Standards of Practice as defined in **Definitions (CHIRO-1.1)**.

- Manual therapy, including myofascial release, is only considered **medically necessary** as a separate and distinct service on the same date as CMT when the services are performed in distinct CMT regions, as described above. Manual therapy services overlap the CMT procedure when both services are performed on the same date in the same anatomical regions.
- Many non-E/M Chiropractic Services include a pre-treatment assessment along with other pre-procedure, intra-procedure and post-post procedure work. This work is not separately reportable as an E/M procedure. However, an additional E/M service may be warranted when the documentation supports that the service is significant, separately identifiable, and medically necessary based on the individual's condition and Generally Accepted Standards of Practice as defined in **Definitions (CHIRO-1.1)**. A separately identifiable E/M procedure is considered **medically necessary** when the documentation reports significant new findings, a significant change to the individual's condition, or a failure to respond to therapeutic interventions that necessitates professional judgment about the continuation of care, modification of treatment goals, and modification or termination of treatment.
- There is a direct therapeutic relationship between the complaint(s) and the service rendered based on Generally Accepted Standards of Practice as defined in **Definitions (CHIRO-1.1)**. The determination of medically necessity for treatment in any body region is based on this direct therapeutic relationship and is not exclusively dependent on provider or patient preferences related to a chiropractic technique or rehabilitation approach.
- Each service or CMT region is related to a quantified functional loss that necessitates treatment.

Procedure Codes

CHIRO.1.2.A

v1.0.2024

This guideline relates to the Procedure Codes listed below. Codes are displayed for informational purposes only. Any given code's inclusion on this list does not necessarily indicate authorization is required.

Code	Code Description/Definition
97010	Application of a modality to 1 or more areas; hot or cold packs
97012	Application of a modality to 1 or more areas; traction, mechanical
97014	Application of a modality to 1 or more areas; electrical stimulation (unattended)
97016	Application of a modality to 1 or more areas; vasopneumatic devices
97018	Application of a modality to 1 or more areas; paraffin bath
97022	Application of a modality to 1 or more areas; whirlpool
97024	Application of a modality to 1 or more areas; diathermy (eg, microwave)
97026	Application of a modality to 1 or more areas; infrared
97028	Application of a modality to 1 or more areas; ultraviolet
97032	Application of a modality to 1 or more areas; electrical stimulation (manual), each 15 minutes
97033	Application of a modality to 1 or more areas; iontophoresis, each 15 minutes
97034	Application of a modality to 1 or more areas; contrast baths, each 15 minute
97035	Application of a modality to 1 or more areas; ultrasound, each 15 minutes
97036	Application of a modality to 1 or more areas; Hubbard tank, each 15 minutes

This guideline relates to the Procedure Codes listed below. Codes are displayed for informational purposes only. Any given code's inclusion on this list does not necessarily indicate authorization is required.

Code	Code Description/Definition
97039	Application of a modality to 1 or more areas; Unlisted modality (specify type and time if constant attendance)
97110	Therapeutic procedure, 1 or more areas, each 15 minutes; therapeutic exercises to develop strength and endurance, range of motion and flexibility
97112	Therapeutic procedure, 1 or more areas, each 15 minutes; neuromuscular reeducation of movement, balance, coordination, kinesthetic sense, posture, and/or proprioception for sitting and/or standing activities
97113	Therapeutic procedure, 1 or more areas, each 15 minutes; aquatic therapy with therapeutic exercises
97116	Therapeutic procedure, 1 or more areas, each 15 minutes; gait training (includes stair climbing)
97124	Therapeutic procedure, 1 or more areas, each 15 minutes; massage, including effleurage, petrissage and/or tapotement (stroking, compression, percussion)
97139	Unlisted therapeutic procedure (specify)
97140	Manual therapy techniques (eg, mobilization/manipulation, manual lymphatic drainage, manual traction), 1 or more regions, each 15 minute
97150	Therapeutic procedure(s), group (2 or more individuals)
97530	Therapeutic activities, direct (one-on-one) patient contact (use of dynamic activities to improve functional performance), each 15 minutes

This guideline relates to the Procedure Codes listed below. Codes are displayed for informational purposes only. Any given code's inclusion on this list does not necessarily indicate authorization is required.

Code	Code Description/Definition
97535	Self-care/home management training (eg, activities of daily living (ADL) and compensatory training, meal preparation, safety procedures, and instructions in use of assistive technology devices/adaptive equipment) direct one-on-one contact, each 15 minutes
97537	Community/work reintegration training (eg, shopping, transportation, money management, avocational activities and/or work environment/modification analysis, work task analysis, use of assistive technology device/adaptive equipment), direct one-on-one contact, each 15 minutes
98940	Chiropractic manipulative treatment (CMT); spinal, 1-2 regions
98941	Chiropractic manipulative treatment (CMT); spinal, 3-4 regions
98942	Chiropractic manipulative treatment (CMT); spinal, 5 regions
98943	Chiropractic manipulative treatment (CMT); extraspinal, 1 or more regions
G0283	Electrical stimulation (unattended), to one or more areas for indication(s) other than wound care, as part of a therapy plan of care
S8948	Application of a modality (requiring constant provider attendance) to one or more areas; low-level laser; each 15 minutes
S8990	Physical or manipulative therapy performed for maintenance rather than restoration.

This guideline relates to the Procedure Codes listed below. Codes are displayed for informational purposes only. Any given code's inclusion on this list does not necessarily indicate authorization is required.

Code	Code Description/Definition
99211	Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of an established patient that may not require the presence of a physician or other qualified health care professional
99212	Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of an established patient, which requires a medically appropriate history and/or examination and straightforward medical decision making. When using total time on the date of the encounter for code selection, 10 minutes must be met or exceeded.
99213	Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of an established patient, which requires a medically appropriate history and/or examination and low level of medical decision making. When using total time on the date of the encounter for code selection, 20 minutes must be met or exceeded.
99214	Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of an established patient, which requires a medically appropriate history and/or examination and moderate level of medical decision making. When using total time on the date of the encounter for code selection, 30 minutes must be met or exceeded.

This guideline relates to the Procedure Codes listed below. Codes are displayed for informational purposes only. Any given code's inclusion on this list does not necessarily indicate authorization is required.

Code	Code Description/Definition
99215	Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of an established patient, which requires a medically appropriate history and/or examination and high level of medical decision making. When using total time on the date of the encounter for code selection, 40 minutes must be met or exceeded.
99202	Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of a new patient, which requires a medically appropriate history and/or examination and straightforward medical decision making. When using total time on the date of the encounter for code selection, 15 minutes must be met or exceeded.
99203	Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of a new patient, which requires a medically appropriate history and/or examination and low level of medical decision making. When using total time on the date of the encounter for code selection, 30 minutes must be met or exceeded.
99204	Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of a new patient, which requires a medically appropriate history and/or examination and moderate level of medical decision making. When using total time on the date of the encounter for code selection, 45 minutes must be met or exceeded.

This guideline relates to the Procedure Codes listed below. Codes are displayed for informational purposes only. Any given code's inclusion on this list does not necessarily indicate authorization is required.

Code	Code Description/Definition
99205	Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of a new patient, which requires a medically appropriate history and/or examination and high level of medical decision making. When using total time on the date of the encounter for code selection, 60 minutes must be met or exceeded.
99358	Prolonged evaluation and management service before and/or after direct patient care; first hour
99359	Prolonged evaluation and management service before and/or after direct patient care; each additional 30 minutes (List separately in addition to code for prolonged service)
99417	Prolonged outpatient evaluation and management service(s) time with or without direct patient contact beyond the required time of the primary service when the primary service level has been selected using total time, each 15 minutes of total time (List separately in addition to the code of the outpatient Evaluation and Management service)

This list may not be all inclusive and is not intended to be used for coding/billing purposes. The final determination of reimbursement for services is the decision of the health plan and is based on the individual's policy or benefit entitlement structure as well as claims processing rules.

Benefits, Coverage Policies, and Eligibility (CHIRO-1.3)

CHIRO.1.3.A**v1.0.2024**

Benefits, coverage policies, and eligibility issues pertaining to each health plan and/or jurisdiction may take precedence over eviCore's medical necessity criteria. The final determination of reimbursement for Chiropractic Services is the decision of the health plan and is based on the individual's policy or benefit entitlement structure as well as claims processing rules. Providers should reference health plan policies for covered and non-covered Chiropractic Services.

Medicare Coverage Policies

- For Medicare programs, the coverage policies of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) take precedence over eviCore's medical necessity criteria. In the absence of an applicable CMS National Coverage Determination, Local Coverage Determination, Local Coverage Article, or CMS Coverage Manual, eviCore policies will apply for the determination of medical necessity of Chiropractic Services for Medicare programs.

Clinical Considerations (CHIRO-2.0)

Guideline	Page
Standardized Assessments (CHIRO-2.1).....	19
Mental Health Considerations (CHIRO-2.2).....	20

Standardized Assessments (CHIRO-2.1)

CHIRO.2.1.A**v1.0.2024**

A variety of standardized assessments can be used. Research has established the following standardized assessments as valid functional measures for musculoskeletal conditions:

Standardized Assessment	Reference
Disabilities of Arm, Shoulder, Hand (DASH and QuickDASH)	Franchignoni 2014; Angst 2011; Rysstad 2020
Hip Disability and Osteoarthritis Outcome Score (HOOS)	Ornetti 2009
Knee Injury and Osteoarthritis Outcome Score (KOOS)	Roos 2003; Ornetti 2009
Lower Extremity Functional Scale (LEFS)	Williams 2012; Binkley 1999
Neck Disability Index (NDI)	Young 2019; MacDermid 2009
Oswestry Disability Index (ODI)	Davidson 2002; Maughan 2010;
Patient Specific Functional Scale (PSFS)	Horn 2012; Hefford 2012; Maughan 2010; Rysstad 2020
Roland-Morris Disability Questionnaire (RMDQ)	Stratford 1996; Ostelo 2004; Maughan 2010
Short Form-12 of the Short Form-36 Health Survey (SF-12)	Díaz-Arribas 2017; Cheak-Zamora 2009; McHorney 1994; Davidson 2002
Shoulder Pain and Disability Index (SPADI)	Schmidt 2014; Angst 2011

Mental Health Considerations (CHIRO-2.2)

CHIRO.2.2.A

v1.0.2024

Referral to a qualified mental health professional is required when there are signs of an unmanaged behavioral health disorder. Immediate referral to a counselor or helpline is required if there are **ANY** indications of thoughts or plans for self-harm. The National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available 24 hours every day at 988 or 1-800-273-8255.

References (CHIRO)

Guideline	Page
References (CHIRO).....	22

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v1.0.2024

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