

AMBULANCE PRIOR AUTHORIZATION TIPS



Medicare may cover repetitive scheduled, non-emergent transportation by ambulance if:

Path 1: Bed-confined so all other methods of transportation are contraindicated

Path 2: Regardless of mobility, transportation is medically required

To effectively communicate the need based on **Path 1**, document:

- What is the structural impairment?
- What is the functional impairment?
- What are the activity limitations?

Structural impairment examples:

- Patient has a stage IV pressure ulcer on sacrum

Functional impairment examples:

- Muscle power functions
 - Weakness of arms and legs
- Muscle tone functions
 - Tone of trunk or lower half of body
- Joint mobility functions
 - Contractures of upper and lower extremities
- Relate the underlying diagnosis (e.g., stroke) to the specific impairment that affects transport

Activity limitation examples:

- Sitting
- Maintaining a sitting position
- Walking

What is/are the activity limitation(s) resulting from the health condition? Identify the severity of any identified impairments and activity limitations and relate them to the non-emergency transport by ambulance.



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To effectively communicate the need based on **Path 2**, describe the impairment/activity limitations NOT related to mobility.

For impairments of mental function:

- How has disease affected the patient's functional ability as it relates to transport?
- Why would a stretcher be required instead of a wheelchair?

For impairments affecting patient stability:

- How does dialysis affect the patient's stability such that non-monitored transport would have a significant risk?

Functional impairments of mental functions may contribute to the physician's determination that ambulance transportation is appropriate. In these cases, the impairments must be *specifically* documented and related to the underlying diagnosis and need for ambulance transport.

The medical documentation must describe how the specific structural and/or functional impairments together with the activity limitations contribute to the determination that stretcher transport is necessary for the patient's safety as it relates to their condition.

Important: Do not just list diagnosis codes.

Resources:

- MLN Matters® Number: SE1514



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