

Change to National Coverage Determination may affect your Medicare coverage

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) sometimes change the coverage rules that apply to an item or service under Medicare. When this happens, CMS issues a National Coverage Determination, or NCD.

NCDs tell us:

- What benefits and services are covered
- What benefits and services are changing
- What Medicare will pay for an item or service

CMS recently issued an update to the NCD that applies to the following service:

Acupuncture for Chronic Lower Back Pain

Here is a description of the change to the NCD. This affects services given **on or after January 21, 2020**.

Services affected	Additional information
<p>The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued an NCD to update Acupuncture for Chronic Lower Back Pain (cLBP)</p>	<p>Acupuncture is the selection and manipulation of specific acupuncture points by a variety of needling and non-needling techniques.</p> <p>CMS will cover acupuncture for Medicare patients with chronic Lower Back Pain (cLBP). cLBP is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lasting 12 weeks or longer, • nonspecific, in that it has no identifiable systemic cause (i.e., not associated with metastatic, inflammatory, infectious, etc. disease), • not associated with surgery, and • not associated with pregnancy <p>Up to 12 visits in 90 days are covered. An additional 8 sessions will be covered for those patients demonstrating an improvement. No more than 20 acupuncture treatments may be administered annually.</p> <p>Treatment must be discontinued if the patient is not improving or is regressing.</p> <p>All types of acupuncture including dry needling for any condition other than cLBP are non-covered by Medicare.</p> <p>This summarizes CMS transmittal R10128NCD.</p>

We’re here to help you

Mercy Care Advantage is an HMO SNP with a Medicare contract and a contract with the Arizona Medicaid Program. Enrollment in Mercy Care Advantage depends on contract renewal. This information is not a complete description of benefits. Contact the plan for more information. Limitations, copayments, and restrictions may apply. Benefits and/or copayments/coinsurance may change on January 1 of each year. The formulary, pharmacy network, and/or provider network may change at any time. You will receive notice when necessary. See Evidence of Coverage for a complete description of benefits, exclusions, limitations and conditions of coverage. If you have questions, Mercy Care Advantage Member Services representatives are available to help you 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m., 7 days a week. Please call 602-586-1730 or 1-877-436-5288 (TTY 711).