

# MEDICAL ASSOCIATES HEALTH PLANS OPERATIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

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**POLICY NUMBER:** 30

**POLICY TITLE:** Vaccines – Provisions to Benefit Coverage

**POLICY STATEMENT:** To outline the process by which Medical Associates Health Plans (MAHP) supports vaccine benefit coverage while ensuring compliance to the mandates of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

**Acronyms:**

**ACIP** – Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices

**HHS** – Health and Human Services

**CDC** – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: The CDC is a national agency that aids the public in controlling and preventing diseases.

**FDA** – Food and Drug Administration

**MMWR** – Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

**USPSTF** – U.S. Preventive Services Task Force

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Quality Improvement (QI) Manager will:
  - a. Monitor vaccine recommendations of the FDA, ACIP, CDC with its weekly MMWR publications, with the assistance of the QI Nurse.
  - b. Obtain the Chief Medical Officer’s approval for the vaccine once a new vaccine recommendation is published.
  - c. Communicate the new vaccine recommendations to the following individuals or departments at MAHP:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. CMO, Chief Medical Officer</li><li>ii. COO, Chief Operating Office</li><li>iii. Director of Operations</li><li>iv. Director of Health Care Services</li><li>v. Manager Underwriter/ Financial Analysts</li><li>vi. Member Services Manager</li><li>vii. Manager of Care Coordination</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>viii. Manager of Utilization Management</li><li>ix. Configuration Supervisor</li><li>x. Claims Manager</li><li>xi. QI Department</li><li>xii. Compliance Analyst</li><li>xiii. Provider Relations Coordinator</li></ol>
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  - d. Provide details of the new vaccine recommendations including age, gender, and/or risk criterion to the Manager Underwriter/Financial Analysts who will then inform the QI Manager if the vaccine coverage will be implemented on January 1 or sooner.
2. Configuration and Claims staff will work together to ensure the appropriate codes are added to new vaccine recommendations through which the claims payment system will be updated accordingly. Once completed, they will inform the QI Manager of such.
3. After the QI Manager is informed, the QI Manager will communicate the vaccine updates including the effective date of coverage to all participating provider offices. Communications may be via email, newsletters or reports and may include practitioners/clinical manager/directors or designated contact for a provider office.
4. The QI Manager and/or QI Nurse will:
  - a. Annually review the CDC’s three immunization schedules which represent the routine immunization services that are designated as preventative care by the ACA. All routinely recommended vaccines (not including vaccines primarily for travel) are listed on these schedules. For any immunization falling outside of the typically recommended age range, one

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can be referred to the footnotes provided on the vaccination schedule for further recommendation.

- b. Post these revised schedules on the internet and intranet along with any other additional published reference documents that should accompany these schedules, with the help of IT and Marketing.
- c. Maintain a spreadsheet of vaccine indications and coverage for staff to reference when determining vaccine coverage.
- d. Review any pended claims for coverage determination by utilizing published CDC recommendations. Once reviewed, remarks will be entered into AMISYS with details on the coverage decision.

**Coverage Rationale-** In accordance with mandates of the ACA, MAHP will provide coverage for any member seeking protection with vaccines when they are prescribed by an in-plan provider and are consistent with the approved and published CDC recommendations. CDC publications include the Annual Immunization Schedules and/or the MMWR. (See ‘Meeting Criteria for Coverage’ below). Grandfathered plans are exempt from this regulation but may elect to follow the ACA mandates. Coverage will be effective within one year of approval date.

**Meeting Criteria for Coverage-** The ACIP meets three times each year and submits their recommendations to the Director of the CDC and the department of HHS. Through-out the year, established vaccines may well receive new or updated recommendations. New vaccines (including combination vaccines) could be developed from vaccine research and advances in immunization technologies. **Any updated recommendations to an existing vaccine or a newly developed vaccine will be a covered benefit on January 1 following an ACIP recommendation adopted by the Director of the CDC unless otherwise approved by the Manager Underwrite/Financial Analysts. This recommendation is considered issued on the date which is the earlier of: the date the recommendation is published in the MMWR, or the date the recommendation is reflected in the Immunization Schedules of the CDC.**

### **Exceptions to coverage**

1. Vaccines that have no distinct ACIP recommendations.
2. Off-label use vaccine (*a vaccine that has not been administered as approved by the FDA*).
3. Immunizations for the sole purpose of travel or employment are typically excluded from coverage in most MAHP plans.
4. Grandfathered plans will have vaccines covered only as group contracts allow (*i.e., Health Choices groups*).
5. Medicare Members - will have coverage as per Medicare guidelines.

The Provider Relations Coordinator communicates CDC vaccine pricing information to the Configuration department on a quarterly basis, or more frequently as needed for new vaccine recommendations.

**Communications:** MAHP staff (including but not limited to: Member Services, Health Care Services, QI Department) receiving calls or inquiries regarding determination of coverage for a vaccine will be able to reply:

**“In accordance with the ACA, vaccines will be a covered benefit provided they are medically indicated by an in-plan provider and are consistent with the current CDC recommendations (unless they are for travel or employment). MAHP also follows Medicare guidelines as not all**

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**vaccines are covered by Medicare. Commercial members who are covered under a Grandfathered plan will be provided with vaccine benefits as per the individual plan contract”.**

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Barb Koerperich, MSN  
Director of Quality and Health Care Services

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Date

Original Effective Date: 08/15  
Revised Dates: 09/16, 07/18, 09/19, 5/20, 5/21

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