

**Utilization Management Timeliness Standards
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)**

| Type of Request | Decision | Notification Timeframes |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Standard Initial Organization Determination (Pre-Service) - If No Extension Requested or Needed</p> | <p>As soon as medically indicated, within a maximum of 7 calendar days after receipt of request.</p> | <p>Within 7 calendar days after receipt of request.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use the Notice of Denial of Medical Coverage (NDMC) template for written notification of denial decision. <p>Reference: CMS Final Rule for 2026, including provisions from the Interoperability and Prior Authorization rule and the Physician Fee Schedule (PFS) (CMS-1832-F).</p> |
| <p>Standard Initial Organization Determination (Pre-Service) - If Extension Requested or Needed</p> | <p>May extend up to 14 calendar days for a total of 21 days if specific criteria are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • .Enrollee Request: The patient explicitly requests an extension for their own reasons. • Need for Medical Evidence: The extension is justified in the enrollee's interest because the payer needs additional medical evidence from a non-contracted provider that could potentially change a denial into an approval. • Extraordinary Circumstances: The extension is necessary due to extraordinary or exigent circumstances and is deemed to be in the patient's best interest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use the MA-Extension: Standard & Expedited to notify member and provider of an extension. <p><u>Extension Notice:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Give notice in writing within 7 calendar days of receipt of request. The extension notice must include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The reasons for the delay 2) The right to file an expedited grievance (oral or written) if they disagree with the decision to grant an extension. <p>Note: The Health Plan must respond to an expedited grievance within 24 hours of receipt.</p> <p><u>Decision Notification After an Extension:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Must occur no later than expiration of extension. Use NDMC template for written notification of denial decision. |
| <p>Expedited Initial Organization Determination - If Expedited Criteria are <u>not met</u></p> | <p>Promptly decide whether to expedite – determine if:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Applying the standard timeframe could seriously jeopardize the life or health of the member or the member’s ability to regain maximum function, or 2) If a physician (contracted or non- | <p>If request is not deemed to be expedited, give the member prompt (within 72 hours) oral notice of the denial of expedited status including the member’s rights followed by written notice within 3 calendar days of the oral notice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use the MA Expedited Criteria Not Met template to provide written notice. The written notice must include: |

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| | <p>contracted) is requesting an expedited decision (oral or written) or is supporting a member’s request for an expedited decision.</p> <p>If submitted as expedited but determined not to be expedited, then standard initial organization determination timeframe applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Automatically transfer the request to the standard timeframe. ▪ The 14 day period begins with the day the request was received for an expedited determination. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Explain that the Health Plan will automatically transfer and process the request using the 14-day timeframe for standard determinations; 2) Inform the member of the right to file an expedited grievance if he/she disagrees with the organization’s decision not to expedite the determination; 3) Inform the member of the right to resubmit a request for an expedited determination and that if the member gets any physician’s support indicating that applying the standard timeframe for making determinations could seriously jeopardize the life or health of the member, or the member’s ability to regain maximum function, the request will be expedited automatically; and 4) Provide instructions about the expedited grievance process and its timeframes. |
| <p>Expedited Initial Organization Determination</p> <p>- If No Extension Requested or Needed (See footnote)¹</p> | <p>As soon as medically necessary, within 72 hours after receipt of request (includes weekends & holidays).</p> | <p>Within 72 hours after receipt of request.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Approvals</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Oral or written notice must be given to member and provider within 72 hours of receipt of request. As a best practice, it is encouraged to provide written notice of favorable decisions (again, including any applicable conditions/parameters of the approval). – – Document date and time oral notice is given. – If written notice only is given, it must be received by member and provider within 72 hours of receipt of request. ▪ <u>Denials</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – When oral notice is given, it must occur within 72 hours of receipt of request and must be followed by written notice within 3 calendar days of the oral notice. |

¹ Note: Health Plans may have referral requirements that may impact timelines. When processing expedited requests, groups must factor in the time it may take to refer the request to the health plan in the total 72 hours to ensure that expedited requests are handled timely.

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Document date and time of oral notice. – If only written notice is given, it must be received by member and provider within 72 hours of receipt of request. – Use NDMC template for written notification of a denial decision, also known as the Integrated Denial Notice (IDN). |
| | | <p>NOTE: Oral notification is considered delivered on the date (and time, if applicable) a plan speaks directly to or leaves a voicemail for an enrollee or enrollee’s representative. Plans may initially provide verbal notification to enrollees prior to issuing written notification.</p> |

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| Type of Request | <u>Decision</u> | Notification Timeframes |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Expedited Initial Organization Determination - If Extension Requested or Needed</p> <p>Part B drug timeframes cannot be extended.</p> | <p>May extend up to 14 calendar days.</p> <p>Note: Extension allowed <i>only</i> if member requests or the provider / organization justifies a need for additional information and is able to demonstrate how the delay is in the interest of the member (for example, the receipt of additional medical evidence from non-contracted providers may change a decision to deny). Extensions <i>must not</i> be used to pend organization determinations while waiting for medical records from contracted providers.</p> <p>When requesting additional information from non-contracted providers, the organization must make an attempt to obtain the information within 24 hours of receipt of the request. This attempt may be verbal, fax or electronic. The Extension Notice may be used to satisfy this requirement if it is delivered within 24 hours (e.g., fax or e-mail to provider). The attempt must be documented in the request file (e.g., copy of e-mail, confirmation of fax, or date/time of verbal request).</p> <p>Documentation of the attempt within 24 hours does not replace the requirement to send the written Extension Notice within 72 hours if requested information is not received timely.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use the MA-Extension: Standard & Expedited template to notify member and provider of an extension. <p><u>Extension Notice:</u></p> <p><u>If it is decided to extend the timeframe, the member must be notified in writing the reasons for the extension and inform the member of the right to file an expedited grievance if the member disagrees with the decision to extend the timeframe.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Give notice in writing, within 72 hours of receipt of request. The extension notice must include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The reasons for the delay 2) The right to file an expedited grievance (oral or written) if they disagree with the decision to grant an extension. <p>Note: The Health Plan must respond to an expedited grievance within 24 hours of receipt.</p> <p><u>Decision Notification After an Extension:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Approvals</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Oral and/or written notice must be given to member and provider no later than upon expiration of extension. – Document date and time oral notice is given. – If written notice only is given, it must be received by member and provider no later than upon expiration of the extension. ▪ <u>Denials</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – When oral notice is given, it must occur no later than upon expiration of extension and must be followed by written notice within 3 calendar days of the oral notice. – Document date and time of oral notice. – If only written notice is given, it must be received by member and provider no later than upon expiration of extension. – Use NDMC template for written notification of a denial decision. |

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Change of Review Priority After a request is initiated as a standard or expedited review, a provider may contact the plan to change the review priority.

If the provider indicates that the member's health requires an expedited decision, the plan must begin the applicable expedited review period at the time they receive the physician's request to expedite the decision.

Note: A change of priority does not allow for extra review time. If the remaining standard review period is less than the applicable expedited review period, the original standard deadline still applies.

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| Type of Request | Decision | Important Message from Medicare (IM) | Detailed Notice of Discharge (DND) |
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| <p>Hospital Discharge Appeal Notices (Concurrent)</p> | <p>Attending physician must concur with discharge decision from inpatient hospital to any other level of care or care setting. Continue coverage of inpatient care until physician concurrence obtained.</p> <p>Hospitals are responsible for valid delivery of the revised Important Message from Medicare (IM):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) within 2 calendar days of admission to a hospital inpatient setting. 2) not more than 2 calendar days prior to discharge from a hospital inpatient setting. <p>Health Plans or delegates are responsible for delivery of the Detailed Notice of Discharge (DND) when a member appeals a discharge decision. DND must be delivered as soon as possible but no later than noon of the day after notification by the QIO (Quality Improvement Organization).</p> | <p>Hospitals must issue the IM within 2 calendar days of admission, obtain the signature of the member or representative and provide a copy of the IM at that time.</p> <p>Hospitals must issue a follow up IM not more than 2 calendar days prior to discharge from an inpatient hospital.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NOTE: Follow up copy of IM is not required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If initial delivery and signing of the IM took place within 2 calendar days of discharge. ▪ When member is being transferred from inpatient to inpatient hospital setting. ▪ For exhaustion of Part A days, when applicable. <p>If IM is given on day of discharge due to unexpected physician order for discharge, member must be given adequate time (at least several hours) to consider their right to request a QIO review.</p> | <p>Upon notification by the QIO that a member or representative has requested an appeal, the Health Plan or delegate must issue the DND to both the member and QIO as soon as possible but no later than noon of the day after notification by the QIO.</p> <p>The DND must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A detailed explanation of why services are either no longer reasonable and necessary or are no longer covered. ▪ A description of any applicable Medicare coverage rules, instructions, or other Medicare policy, including information about how the member may obtain a copy of the Medicare policy from the MA organization. ▪ Any applicable Medicare health plan policy, contract provision, or rationale upon which the discharge determination was based. ▪ Facts specific to the member and relevant to the coverage determination sufficient to advise the member of the applicability of the coverage rule or |

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| Type of Request | Decision | Important Message from Medicare (IM) | Detailed Notice of Discharge (DND) |
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| | | | <p>policy to the member's case.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any other information required by CMS. |

| Type of Request | Decision | Notice of Medicare Non-Coverage (NOMNC) Notification | Detailed Explanation of Non-Coverage (DENC) Notification |
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| <p>Termination of Provider Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) Home Health Agency (HHA) Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Facility (CORF) <p>NOTE: This process does not apply to SNF Exhaustion of Benefits (100 day limit).</p> | <p>The Health Plan or delegate is responsible for making the decision to end services no later than two (2) calendar days or 2 visits before coverage ends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discharge from SNF, HHA or CORF services <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A determination that such services are no longer medically necessary | <p>The SNF, HHA or CORF is responsible for delivery of the NOMNC to the member or authorized representative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NOMNC must be delivered no later than 2 calendar days or 2 visits prior to the proposed termination of services and must include: member name, delivery date, date that coverage of services ends, and QIO contact information. The NOMNC may be delivered earlier if the date that coverage will end is known. If expected length of stay or service is 2 days or less, give notice on admission. <p>Note: Check with Health Plan or delegate for delegated responsibility, as a Health Plan or delegate may choose to deliver the NOMNC instead of the provider.</p> | <p>Upon notification by the Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) that a member or authorized representative has requested an appeal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Health Plan or delegate must issue the DENC to both the QIO and member no later than close of business of the day the QIO notifies the Health Plan of the appeal. |

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| <p>Part Band C Prescription Drugs</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part B Standard: Within 72 hours of receipt of request Expedited: Within 24 hours of receipt of request <p><u>Note: Part B drug timeframes cannot be extended.</u></p> <p>Part C</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard: Within 14 days of receipt of request Can be extended up to 28 days | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part B Standard: Within 72 hours of receipt of request Expedited: Within 24 hours of receipt of request <p><u>Note: Part B drug timeframes cannot be extended.</u></p> <p>Part C</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard: Within 14 days of receipt of request Expedited: Within 72 hours of receipt of request | <p>Standard: Within 72 hours after receipt of request (Part B) or 14 days of receipt of request (Part C).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Notice of Denial of Medical Coverage (NDMC) template for written notification of denial decision <p>Expedited Approvals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral or written notice must be given to member and |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expedited: Within 72 hours of receipt of request ▪ Can be extended up to 17 days. | <p>Note: Written notification is considered delivered on the date (and time, if applicable) the notice has left the possession of the plan or delegated entity. Generally, this occurs when the notice has been deposited into the courier drop box or external outgoing mail receptacle (e.g., U.S. Postal Service or FedEx bin) or for electronic delivery of required materials, the date the plan sends the materials to the enrollee (see Section 100.2.2 of the Medicare Marketing Guidelines for requirements on delivering electronic materials to enrollees). Placement into the plan or delegated entity’s internal outgoing mail receptacle is not considered delivered.</p> | <p>provider within 24 hours of receipt of request (Part B) or 72 hours of receipt of request (Part C).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document date and time oral notice is given. ▪ Verbal notice may be initially provided to the enrollee as long as written notice is mailed within 3 calendar days of verbal notification. <p>Denials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oral or written notice must be given to member and provider within 24 hours of receipt of request (Part B) or 72 hours of receipt of request (Part C). ▪ Verbal notice may be initially provided to the enrollee as long as written notice is mailed within 3 calendar days of verbal notification. Document date and time of oral notice. ▪ Use NDMC template for written notification of a denial decision. |
| <p>Part D Prescription Drugs (only)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Part D ▪ Standard: Within 72 hours of receipt of request ▪ Expedited: Within 24 hours of receipt of request | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Part D ▪ Standard: Within 72 hours of receipt of request ▪ Expedited: Within 24 hours of receipt of request <p>Note: Written notification is considered delivered on the date (and time, if applicable) the notice has left the possession of the plan or</p> | <p>For Approvals or Denials: Within 24 hours after receipt of request.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Verbal notice may be initially provided to the enrollee as long as written notice is mailed within 3 calendar days of verbal notification. |

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| | | <p>delegated entity. Generally, this occurs when the notice has been deposited into the courier drop box or external outgoing mail receptacle (e.g., U.S. Postal Service or FedEx bin) or for electronic delivery of required materials, the date the plan sends the materials to the enrollee (see Section 100.2.2 of the Medicare Marketing Guidelines for requirements on delivering electronic materials to enrollees). Placement into the plan or delegated entity's internal outgoing mail receptacle is not considered delivered.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use the Notice of Denial of Medical Coverage (NDMC) template for written notification of denial decision <p><u>Approvals or Denials</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oral or written notice must be given to member and provider within 24 hours of receipt of request. ▪ Verbal notice may be initially provided to the enrollee as long as written notice is mailed within 3 calendar days of verbal notification. ▪ Document date and time oral notice is given. ▪ If written notice only is given, it must be received by member and provider within 24 hours of receipt of request. <p><u>Denials</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Verbal notice may be initially provided to the enrollee as long as written notice is mailed within 3 calendar days of verbal notification. ▪ Document date and time of oral notice. ▪ If only written notice is given, it |
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| | | | <p>must be received by member and provider within 24 hours of receipt of request.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use NDMC template for written notification of a denial decision. |
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Exclusively Aligned Enrollment (EAE) Integrated Determination Processing Turnaround Timeframes:

| Type | Processing Timeframe | With Extension |
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| Standard Medicare or Medi-Cal pre-service requests | Within five (5) working days of receiving necessary information, but no later than 7 calendar days | No extensions allowed |
| Expedited Medicare or Medi-Cal pre-service or payment requests | 72 hours | No extensions allowed |
| Standard Part B Drug | 72 hours | No extensions allowed |
| Expedited Part B Drug | 24 hours | No extensions allowed |