Clinical Guidelines:  
Air Ambulance Transportation  

Medical Necessity  

Air ambulance transportation, by helicopter or fixed wing aircraft, is medically necessary when the following criteria are met:

A. The member’s medical condition requires immediate and rapid ambulance transportation that cannot be provided by ground ambulance; that is, the member’s condition is such that the time needed to transport by ground, or the instability of transportation by ground, poses a threat to the member’s survival or seriously endangers the member’s health; AND

B. The point of pickup is inaccessible by ground vehicle, such as in remote or sparsely populated areas, OR

C. Great distances or other obstacles are involved in getting the member to the nearest facility able to provide the appropriate care, such as limited emergency cases where ground transportation is available, but the time required to transport the member by ground rather than air endangers the member’s life or health, for example, when it would take a ground ambulance 30-60 minutes or more to transport a member whose medical condition at the time of pick-up required immediate and rapid transport due to the nature and/or severity of the illness or injury.

Applicable Billing Codes

HCPCS Codes

A0140 - Nonemergency transportation and air travel (private or commercial) intra- or interstate

A0424 - Extra ambulance attendant, ground (ALS or BLS) or air (fixed or rotary winged);

A0430 - Ambulance service, conventional air services, transport, one way (fixed wing)

A0431 - Ambulance service, conventional air services, transport, one way (rotary wing)

A0435 - Fixed wing air mileage, per statute mile
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**Revenue Codes**

- **A0436** - Rotary wing air mileage, per statute mile
- **A0999** - Unlisted ambulance service
- **S9960** - Ambulance service, conventional air services, nonemergency transport, one way (fixed wing)
- **S9961** - Ambulance service, conventional air service, nonemergency transport, one way (rotary wing)

**Related Policies and References**


Amendment to
Aetna Clinical Policy Bulletin Number: Air Ambulance Transportation

There are no amendments for Medicaid.