



STATE OF IOWA

CHESTER J. CULVER, GOVERNOR
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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
CHARLES J. KROGMEIER, DIRECTOR

INFORMATIONAL LETTER NO. 851

DATE: November 12, 2009

TO: All Iowa Medicaid Participating Medical Supply Providers, Pharmacies, Nursing Facilities and ICF/MR Facilities

ISSUED BY: Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Medicaid Enterprise

RE: **Food Thickener (B4100) and Medical Foods (S9435)**

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon Receipt

Medicaid policy allows for coverage of enteral nutritional products and supplies when prior approval is obtained. Because an enteral feeding tube is considered a prosthetic, the nutritional products and supplies for use with the prosthetic (feeding tube) are allowed as separately payable items for members in nursing facilities and ICFs/MR.

Nutritional products consumed orally by members in nursing facilities or ICFs/MR are not separately payable. They are not used with a prosthetic. Nursing facilities and ICFs/MR are responsible to provide for the nutritional requirements, including special dietary needs, of Medicaid members. Medicaid reimbursement for nutrition, including special dietary requirements, is considered included in the facility per diem.

The IME has reviewed its policy for requests for food thickener and for medical food products. After this review the IME has determined that, as an oral nutritional product, they can be allowed under the regular Medicaid policy, when prior approval is obtained.

Providing food thickener and medical food products for members **in nursing facilities or ICFs/MR** is still the responsibility of the facility.

Initial prior authorization requests for food thickener must include the results of a swallow study that shows the member either has aspiration or has increased risk for aspiration. Subsequent requests for food thickener for chronic conditions do not need to include the results of a current swallow study unless the amount needed has changed. Example: A change from nectar to honey consistency.

Some medical food products recently requested have not been approved for use by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as medical foods. A National Drug Classification number (NDC) is indicative of approval by the FDA. Medical foods are covered when efficacy of treatment for a specific medical diagnosis has been scientifically evaluated and supported. The efficacy of specific medical foods will be determined as proven when an NDC has been issued by the FDA. Medical foods that do not have an NDC number are not covered.

NOTE: Medicaid does not allow for coverage of items when there is a realistically feasible, less costly alternative. Medicaid payment is based on the least expensive item that meets the member's medical needs. When less costly nutritional products are available, the documentation **must** show a medical reason why the member cannot consume the required calories from less costly alternatives.

Example: A nutrition drink instead of a protein bar. Medical foods for convenience reasons only are not covered.

If you have any questions, please contact IME Provider Services, 1-800-338-7909, locally 515-725-1004 or by e-mail at imeproviderservices@dhs.state.ia.us