441—78.19(249A) Rehabilitation agencies.

78.19(1) *Coverage of services.*

a. General provisions regarding coverage of services.

(1) Services are provided in the recipient's home or in a care facility (other than a hospital) by a speech therapist, physical therapist, or occupational therapist employed by or contracted by the agency. Services provided a recipient residing in a nursing facility or residential care facility are payable when a statement is submitted signed by the facility that the facility does not have these services available. The statement need only be submitted at the start of care unless the situation changes. Payment will not be made to a rehabilitation agency for therapy provided to a recipient residing in an intermediate care facility for the mentally retarded since these facilities are responsible for providing or paying for services required by recipients.

(2) All services must be determined to be medically necessary, reasonable, and meet a significant need of the recipient that cannot be met by a family member, friend, medical staff personnel, or other caregiver; must meet accepted standards of medical practice; and must be a specific and effective treatment for a patient's medical or disabling condition.

(3) In order for a service to be payable, a licensed therapist must complete a plan of treatment every 30 days and indicate the type of service required. The plan of treatment must contain the information noted in subrule 78.19(2).

(4) There is no specific limitation on the number of visits for which payment through the program will be made so long as that amount of service is medically necessary in the individual case, is related to a diagnosed medical impairment or disabling condition, and meets the current standards of practice in each related field. Documentation must be submitted with each claim to support the need for the number of services being provided.

(5) Payments will be made both for restorative service and also for maintenance types of service. Essentially, maintenance services means services to a patient whose condition is stabilized and who requires observation by a therapist of conditions defined by the physician as indicating a possible deterioration of health status. This would include persons with long-term illnesses or a disabling condition whose status is stable rather than posthospital. Refer to 78.19(1)*"b"*(7) and (8) for guidelines under restorative and maintenance therapy.

(6) Restorative or maintenance therapy sessions must meet the following criteria:

1. There must be face-to-face patient contact interaction.

2. Services must be provided primarily on an individual basis. Group therapy is covered, but total units of service in a month shall not exceed total units of individual therapy. Family members receiving therapy may be included as part of a group.

3. Treatment sessions may be no less than 15 minutes of service and no more than 60 minutes of service per date unless more than 60 minutes of service is required for a treatment session due to the patient's specific condition. If more than 60 minutes of service is required for a treatment session, additional documentation of the specific condition and the need for the longer treatment session shall be submitted with the claim. A unit of treatment shall be considered to be 15 minutes in length.

4. Progress must be documented in measurable statistics in the progress notes in order for services to be reimbursed. Refer to 78.19(1)*"b"*(7) and (8) for guidelines under restorative and maintenance therapy.

(7) Payment will be made for an appropriate period of diagnostic therapy or trial therapy (up to two months) to determine a patient's rehabilitation potential and establish appropriate short-term and long-term goals. Documentation must be submitted with each plan to support the need for diagnostic or trial therapy. Refer to 78.19(1)*"b"*(16) for guidelines under diagnostic or trial therapy.

b. Physical therapy services.

(1) To be covered under rehabilitation agency services, physical therapy services must relate directly and specifically to an active written treatment plan, follow a treatment plan established by the licensed therapist after consultation with the physician, be reasonable and necessary to the treatment of the person's illness, injury, or disabling condition, be specific and effective treatment for the patient's medical or disabling condition, and be of such a level of complexity and sophistication, or the condition

of the patient must be such that the services required can be safely and effectively performed only by a qualified physical therapist or under the supervision of the therapist.

(2) A qualified physical therapist assistant may provide any restorative services performed by a licensed physical therapist under supervision of the therapist as set forth in the department of public health, professional licensure division, 645—subrule 200.20(7).

(3) The initial physical therapy evaluation must be provided by a licensed physical therapist.

(4) There must be an expectation that there will be a significant, practical improvement in the patient's condition in a reasonable amount of time based on the patient's restorative potential assessed by the physician.

(5) It must be demonstrated there is a need to establish a safe and effective maintenance program related to a specific disease state, illness, injury, or disabling condition.

(6) The amount, frequency, and duration of the services must be reasonable.

(7) Restorative therapy must be reasonable and necessary to the treatment of the patient's injury or disabling condition. The expected restorative potential must be practical and in relation to the extent and duration of the treatment. There must be an expectation that the patient's medical or disabling condition will show functional improvement in a reasonable period of time. Functional improvement means that demonstrable measurable increases have occurred in the patient's level of independence outside the therapeutic environment.

(8) Generally, maintenance therapy means services to a patient whose condition is stabilized and who requires observation by a therapist of conditions defined by the physician as indicating a possible deterioration of health status. This includes persons with long-term illnesses or disabling conditions whose status is stable rather than posthospital. Maintenance therapy is also appropriate for individuals whose condition is such that a professionally established program of activities, exercises, or stimulation is medically necessary to prevent deterioration or maintain present functioning levels.

Where a maintenance program is appropriate, the initial evaluation and the instruction of the patient, family members, home health aides, facility personnel, or other caregivers to carry out the program are considered a covered physical therapy service. Payment shall be made for a maximum of three visits to establish a maintenance program and instruct the caregivers. Payment for supervisory visits to monitor the program is limited to two per month for a maximum period of 12 months. The plan of treatment must specify the anticipated monitoring activity of the supervisor.

Beyond evaluation, instruction, and monitoring, maintenance therapy is not reimbursable.

After 12 months of maintenance therapy, a reevaluation is a covered service, if medically necessary. A reevaluation will be considered medically necessary only if there is a significant change in residential or employment situation or the patient exhibits an increase or decrease in functional ability or motivation, clearing of confusion, or the remission of some other medical condition which previously contraindicated restorative therapy. A statement by the interdisciplinary team of a person with developmental disabilities recommending a reevaluation and stating the basis for medical necessity will be considered as supporting the necessity of a reevaluation and may expedite approval.

(Restorative and maintenance therapy definitions also apply to speech and occupational therapy.)

When a patient is under a restorative physical therapy program, the patient's condition is regularly reevaluated and the program adjusted by the physical therapist. It is expected that prior to discharge, a maintenance program has been designed by the physical therapist. Consequently, where a maintenance program is not established until after the restorative program has been completed, it would not be considered reasonable and necessary to the treatment of the patient's condition and would be excluded from coverage.

(9) Hot packs, hydrocollator, infrared treatments, paraffin baths, and whirlpool baths do not ordinarily require the skills of a qualified physical therapist. These are covered when the patient's condition is complicated by other conditions such as a circulatory deficiency or open wounds or if the service is an integral part of a skilled physical therapy procedure.

(10) Gait training and gait evaluation and training constitute a covered service if the patient's ability to walk has been impaired by a neurological, muscular or skeletal condition or illness. The gait training must be expected to significantly improve the patient's ability to walk or level of independence.

Repetitious exercise to increase endurance of weak or unstable patients can be safely provided by supportive personnel, e.g., aides, nursing personnel. Therefore, it is not a covered physical therapy service.

(11) Ultrasound, shortwave, and microwave diathermy treatments are considered covered services.

(12) Range of motion tests must be performed by a qualified physical therapist. Range of motion exercises require the skills of a qualified physical therapist only when they are part of the active treatment of a specific disease or disabling condition which has resulted in a loss or restriction of mobility.

Documentation must reflect the degree of motion lost, the normal range of motion, and the degree to be restored.

Range of motion to unaffected joints only does not constitute a covered physical therapy service.

(13) Reconditioning programs after surgery or prolonged hospitalization are not covered as physical therapy.

(14) Therapeutic exercises would constitute a physical therapy service due either to the type of exercise employed or to the condition of the patient.

(15) Use of isokinetic or isotonic type equipment in physical therapy is covered when normal range of motion of a joint is affected due to bone, joint, ligament or tendon injury or postsurgical trauma. Billing can only be made for the time actually spent by the therapist in instructing the patient and assessing the patient's progress.

(16) When recipients do not meet restorative or maintenance therapy criteria, diagnostic or trial therapy may be utilized. When the initial evaluation is not sufficient to determine whether there are rehabilitative goals that should be addressed, diagnostic or trial therapy to establish goals shall be considered appropriate. Diagnostic or trial therapy may be appropriate for recipients who need evaluation in multiple environments in order to adequately determine their rehabilitative potential. Diagnostic or trial therapy consideration may be appropriate when there is a need to assess the patient's response to treatment in the recipient's environment.

When during diagnostic or trial therapy a recipient has been sufficiently evaluated to determine potential for restorative or maintenance therapy, or lack of therapy potential, diagnostic or trial therapy ends. When as a result of diagnostic or trial therapy, restorative or maintenance therapy is found appropriate, claims shall be submitted noting restorative or maintenance therapy (instead of diagnostic or trial therapy).

At the end of diagnostic or trial therapy, the rehabilitation provider shall recommend continuance of services under restorative therapy, recommend continuance of services under maintenance therapy, or recommend discontinuance of services. Continuance of services under restorative or maintenance therapy will be reviewed based on the criteria in place for restorative or maintenance therapy.

Trial therapy shall not be granted more often than once per year for the same issue. If the recipient has a previous history of rehabilitative services, trial therapy for the same type of services generally would be payable only when a significant change has occurred since the last therapy. Requests for subsequent diagnostic or trial therapy for the same issue would require documentation reflecting a significant change. See number 4 below for guidelines under a significant change. Further diagnostic or trial therapy for the same issue would not be considered appropriate when progress was not achieved, unless the reasons which blocked change previously are listed and the reasons the new diagnostic or trial therapy would not have these blocks are provided.

The number of diagnostic or trial therapy hours authorized in the initial treatment period shall not exceed 12 hours per month. Documentation of the medical necessity and the plan for services under diagnostic trial therapy are required as they will be reviewed in the determination of the medical necessity of the number of hours of service provided.

Diagnostic or trial therapy standards also apply to speech and occupational therapy.

The following criteria additionally must be met:

1. There must be face-to-face interaction with a licensed therapist. (An aide's services will not be payable.)

2. Services must be provided on an individual basis. (Group diagnostic or trial therapy will not be payable.)

3. Documentation of the diagnostic therapy or trial therapy must reflect the provider's plan for therapy and the recipient's response.

4. If the recipient has a previous history of rehabilitative services, trial therapy for the same type of services generally would be payable only when a significant change has occurred since the last therapy. A significant change would be considered as having occurred when any of the following exist: new onset, new problem, new need, new growth issue, a change in vocational or residential setting that requires a reevaluation of potential, or surgical intervention that may have caused new rehabilitative potentials.

5. For persons who received previous rehabilitative treatment, consideration of trial therapy generally should occur only if the person has incorporated any regimen recommended during prior treatment into the person's daily life to the extent of the person's abilities.

6. Documentation should include any previous attempts to resolve problems using nontherapy personnel (i.e., residential group home staff, family members, etc.) and whether follow-up programs from previous therapy have been carried out.

7. Referrals from residential, vocational or other rehabilitation personnel that do not meet present evaluation, restorative or maintenance criteria shall be considered for trial therapy. Documentation of the proposed service, the medical necessity and the current medical or disabling condition, including any secondary rehabilitative diagnosis, will need to be submitted with the claim.

8. Claims for diagnostic or trial therapy shall reflect the progress being made toward the initial diagnostic or trial therapy plan.

c. Occupational therapy services.

(1) To be covered under rehabilitation agency services, occupational therapy services must be included in a plan of treatment, improve or restore practical functions which have been impaired by illness, injury, or disabling condition, or enhance the person's ability to perform those tasks required for independent functioning, be prescribed by a physician under a plan of treatment, be performed by a qualified licensed occupational therapist or a qualified licensed occupational therapist assistant under the general supervision of a qualified licensed occupational therapist as set forth in the department of public health, professional licensure division, rule 645—201.9(148B), and be reasonable and necessary for the treatment of the person's illness, injury, or disabling condition.

(2) Restorative therapy is covered when an expectation exists that the therapy will result in a significant practical improvement in the person's condition.

However, in these cases where there is a valid expectation of improvement met at the time the occupational therapy program is instituted, but the expectation goal is not realized, services would only be covered up to the time one would reasonably conclude the patient would not improve.

The guidelines under restorative therapy, maintenance therapy, and diagnostic or trial therapy for physical therapy in 78.19(1)*"b"*(7), (8), and (16) apply to occupational therapy.

(3) Maintenance therapy, or any activity or exercise program required to maintain a function at the restored level, is not a covered service. However, designing a maintenance program in accordance with the requirements of 78.19(1)*"b"*(8) and monitoring the progress would be covered.

(4) The selection and teaching of tasks designed to restore physical function are covered.

(5) Planning and implementing therapeutic tasks, such as activities to restore sensory-integrative functions are covered. Other examples include providing motor and tactile activities to increase input and improve responses for a stroke patient.

(6) The teaching of activities of daily living and energy conservation to improve the level of independence of a patient which require the skill of a licensed therapist and meet the definition of restorative therapy is covered.

(7) The designing, fabricating, and fitting of orthotic and self-help devices are considered covered services if they relate to the patient's condition and require occupational therapy. A maximum of 13 visits is reimbursable.

(8) Vocational and prevocational assessment and training are not payable by Medicaid. These include services which are related solely to specific employment opportunities, work skills, or work settings.

d. Speech therapy services.

(1) To be covered by Medicaid as rehabilitation agency services, speech therapy services must be included in a plan of treatment established by the licensed, skilled therapist after consultation with the physician, relate to a specific medical diagnosis which will significantly improve a patient's practical, functional level in a reasonable and predictable time period, and require the skilled services of a speech therapist. Services provided by a speech aide are not reimbursable.

(2) Speech therapy activities which are considered covered services include: restorative therapy services to restore functions affected by illness, injury, or disabling condition resulting in a communication impairment or to develop functions where deficiencies currently exist. Communication impairments fall into the general categories of disorders of voice, fluency, articulation, language, and swallowing disorders resulting from any condition other than mental impairment. Treatment of these conditions is payable if restorative criteria are met.

(3) Aural rehabilitation, the instruction given by a qualified speech pathologist in speech reading or lip reading to patients who have suffered a hearing loss (input impairment), constitutes a covered service if reasonable and necessary to the patient's illness or injury. Group treatment is not covered. Audiological services related to the use of a hearing aid are not reimbursable.

(4) Teaching a patient to use sign language and to use an augmentative communication device is reimbursable. The patient must show significant progress outside the therapy sessions in order for these services to be reimbursable.

(5) Where a maintenance program is appropriate, the initial evaluation, the instruction of the patient and caregivers to carry out the program, and supervisory visits to monitor progress are covered services. Beyond evaluation, instruction, and monitoring, maintenance therapy is not reimbursable. However, designing a maintenance program in accordance with the requirements of maintenance therapy and monitoring the progress are covered.

(6) The guidelines and limits on restorative therapy, maintenance therapy, and diagnostic or trial therapy for physical therapy in 78.19(1)*"b"*(7), (8), and (16) apply to speech therapy. If the only goal of prior rehabilitative speech therapy was to learn the prerequisite speech components, then number "5" under 78.19(1)*"b"*(16) will not apply to trial therapy.

78.19(2) *General guidelines for plans of treatment.*

a. The minimum information to be included on medical information forms and treatment plans includes:

(1) The patient's current medical condition and functional abilities, including any disabling condition.

(2) The physician's signature and date (within the certification period).

(3) Certification period.

(4) Patient's progress in measurable statistics. (Refer to 78.19(1)*"b"*(16).)

(5) The place services are rendered.

(6) Dates of prior hospitalization (if applicable or known).

(7) Dates of prior surgery (if applicable or known).

(8) The date the patient was last seen by the physician (if available).

(9) A diagnosis relevant to the medical necessity for treatment.

(10) Dates of onset of any diagnoses for which treatment is being rendered (if applicable).

(11) A brief summary of the initial evaluation or baseline.

(12) The patient's prognosis.

(13) The services to be rendered.

(14) The frequency of the services and discipline of the person providing the service.

(15) The anticipated duration of the services and the estimated date of discharge (if applicable).

(16) Assistive devices to be used.

(17) Functional limitations.

(18) The patient's rehabilitative potential and the extent to which the patient has been able to apply the skills learned in the rehabilitation setting to everyday living outside the therapy sessions.

(19) The date of the last episode of instability or the date of the last episode of acute recurrence of illness or symptoms (if applicable).

(20) Quantitative, measurable, short-term and long-term functional goals.
(21) The period of time of a session.
(22) Prior treatment (history related to current diagnosis) if available or known.

b. The information to be included when developing plans for teaching, training, and counseling include:

(1) To whom the services were provided (patient, family member, etc.).
(2) Prior teaching, training, or counseling provided.
(3) The medical necessity of the rendered services.
(4) The identification of specific services and goals.
(5) The date of the start of the services.
(6) The frequency of the services.
(7) Progress in response to the services.
(8) The estimated length of time the services are needed.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 249A.4.