

**441—79.9(249A) Requests for prior authorization.** This rule governs requests for prior authorization for services not provided through an MCO. For services provided through an MCO, the prior authorization request is submitted, reviewed, and authorized by the MCO.

**79.9(1) Making the request.**

*a.* Providers may submit requests for prior authorization for any items or procedures, other than prescription drugs, by mail or by facsimile transmission (fax) using an Outpatient Prior Authorization Request form, or electronically using the Accredited Standards Committee (ASC) X12N 278 transaction, Health Care Services Request for Review and Response. Requests for prior authorization for drugs must be submitted on any Request for Prior Authorization form designated for the drug being requested in the preferred drug list published pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 249A.

*b.* Providers shall send requests for prior authorization to Iowa Medicaid. The request should address the relevant criteria applicable to the particular service, medication or equipment for which prior authorization is sought according to rule 441—78.28(249A). Copies of history and examination results may be attached to rather than incorporated in the letter.

*c.* If a request for prior authorization submitted electronically requires attachments or supporting clinical documentation and a national electronic attachment has not been adopted, the provider shall:

(1) Use a Prior Authorization Attachment Control form as the cover sheet for the paper attachments or supporting clinical documentation; and

(2) Reference on that form the attachment control number submitted on the ASC X12N 278 electronic transaction.

**79.9(2)** The policy applies to services or items specifically designated as requiring prior authorization.

**79.9(3)** The provider shall receive a notice of approval or denial for all requests.

*a.* In the case of prescription drugs, notices of approval or denial will be faxed to the prescriber and pharmacy.

*b.* Decisions regarding approval or denial of prescription drugs will be made within 24 hours from the receipt of the prior authorization request. In cases where the request is received during nonworking hours, the time limit will be construed to start with the first hour of the normal working day following the receipt of the request.

*c.* Decisions regarding approval or denial for items or procedures other than prescription drugs will be made according to the time frames set forth in 42 CFR 438.210(d) as amended to July 1, 2026.

**79.9(4)** Prior authorizations approved because a decision is not timely made shall not be considered a precedent for future similar requests.

**79.9(5)** Approved prior authorization applies to covered services and does not apply to the recipient's eligibility for medical assistance.

**79.9(6)** If a provider is unsure if an item or service is covered because it is rare or unusual, the provider may submit a request for prior approval in the same manner as other requests for prior approval in subrule 79.9(1).

**79.9(7)** Requests for prior approval of services will be reviewed according to rule 441—79.9(249A) and the conditions for payment as established by rule in 441—Chapter 78.

*a.* Where ambiguity exists as to whether a particular item or service is covered, requests for prior approval will be reviewed according to the following criteria in order of priority:

(1) The conditions for payment outlined in the provider manual with reference to coverage and duration.

(2) The determination made by the Medicare program unless specifically stated differently in state law or rule.

(3) The recommendation to the department from the appropriate advisory committee.

(4) Whether there are other less expensive covered procedures that would be as effective.

(5) The advice of an appropriate professional consultant.

*b.* When Iowa Medicaid has not reached a decision on a request for prior authorization after 60 days from the date of receipt, the request will be approved.

**79.9(8)** The amount, duration and scope of the Medicaid program is outlined in 441—Chapters 78, 79, 81, 82 and 85. Additional clarification of policies is available in the provider manual distributed and updated to all participating providers.

**79.9(9)** Iowa Medicaid will issue a notice of decision to the recipient upon a denial of request for prior approval pursuant to 441—Chapter 16. Iowa Medicaid will mail the notice of decision to the recipient within five working days of the date the prior approval form is returned to the provider.

**79.9(10)** If a request for prior approval is denied by Iowa Medicaid, the request may be resubmitted for reconsideration with additional information justifying the request. The aggrieved party may file an appeal in accordance with 441—Chapter 2506.

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