



# New Technology Assessment

Western Health Advantage (WHA) routinely reviews new technology to make sure the quality of care our members receive meets current acceptable standards of medical practice. While some new technologies prove to be advantageous to our members, others may actually cause harm. Thorough study is needed to make sure our members receive the highest quality care whenever a new technology treatment, device or procedure is requested.

## **How does the review process work?**

If your doctor orders a treatment or service that involves new technology and it is considered experimental or investigational, your medical group (group) forwards the request to WHA's Chief Medical Officer, a physician, for review. Clinical information is provided by your doctor and compared to specialized new technology criteria to verify the current status of the requested treatment. In many cases, independent physician experts are consulted for specific recommendations. Sometimes these investigations reveal that a new technology is no longer considered experimental and the treatment is then included as a covered benefit.

## **What happens when new technology is not a covered benefit?**

If WHA decides a requested service is experimental or investigational, and it is therefore *not* a covered benefit, you and your doctor will be notified of the decision in writing. The notification letter contains information on how you, your physician or another representative acting on your behalf, may request additional consideration (an appeal) of the decision. If you have a life threatening or severely debilitating condition that qualifies for urgent handling of the appeal, your doctor may request an expedited (fast) review, verbally or in writing.

## **What rights do I have when coverage is denied?**

You, your physician or another representative acting on your behalf, have the right to request an independent medical review when coverage is denied as experimental or investigational, if your physician certifies that:

- you have a terminal condition for which standard therapies are not, or have not been effective in improving your condition; or
- standard therapy would not be medically appropriate for you; or
- WHA does not have a standard therapy as a covered benefit other than the therapy recommended (certain conditions apply).

If you have a life-threatening or severely debilitating condition and you or your physician disagrees with the denial of a service, medication, device or procedure that is considered experimental by WHA, and you meet the above criteria, you may request a review by outside board certified medical experts. You may also request a face-to-face meeting with WHA's Chief Medical Officer to discuss your case.

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Public document: This fact sheet is a general guide only. Consult your Evidence of Coverage (EOC) booklet for a detailed description of benefits and limitations.

### **Who pays for cost of services considered experimental or investigational?**

Although WHA does not cover the cost of services that are considered experimental or investigational, you may qualify for payment of “routine patient care costs” associated with participation in certain cancer clinical trials. To qualify, you must have a referral from your physician, obtain prior authorization (pre-approval) from WHA, and meet certain other conditions.

### **Where can I find more information?**

For more information about *Cancer Clinical Trials or Experimental and Investigational* coverage, please refer to WHA’s Evidence of Coverage and Disclosure Form booklet.

You can also view our website at [www.westernhealth.com](http://www.westernhealth.com) for more information about WHA’s services and member rights.

TDD/TTY service is available for the hearing or speech-impaired, Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm in either English or Spanish, by calling: (888) 877-5378, or you can dial 711. Should you have need for a translator face-to-face or over the phone, contact the **WHA Member Services department**, Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, (888) 563-2250 toll free.

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**IMPORTANTE:** ¿Puede leer este documento? Si no, nosotros le podemos ayudar a leerlo. Además, usted puede recibir el documento escrito en español. Para obtener ayuda gratuita, llame ahora mismo a Western Health Advantage al (888) 563-2250, de lunes a viernes de 8am a 5pm.

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