

REIMBURSEMENT POLICY	
Policy Name:	Sepsis-3
Policy Number:	PI-013
Products:	Pennsylvania HealthChoices Medical Assistance All Medicare Products

Disclaimer

Highmark Wholecare's medical claims payment and prior-authorization policy is a reference resource regarding payment and coverage for the services described. This policy does not constitute medical advice and is not intended to govern and/or otherwise influence medical necessity decisions.

Sepsis-3:

Sepsis-3 will be used as part of our clinical claim reviews to validate that sepsis was present and sepsis treatment services were appropriately submitted as part of the member's claim. Hospital payments will be adjusted if we determine, after reviewing the member's medical record and Sepsis-3, that sepsis was not present and sepsis treatment services should not have been included as part of the member's claim. Sepsis-3 will be used for all Highmark Wholecare benefit plans including Medicare Advantage and Medicaid plans.

Sepsis is a syndrome of physiologic, pathologic and biochemical abnormalities induced by infection, and is a major public health concern. The reported incidence of sepsis is increasing and is recognized as a leading cause of mortality and critical illness worldwide.

Gateway adopted Sepsis-3, which is the most recent evidence-based definition of Sepsis and supports the Surviving Sepsis Campaign International Guidelines as part of its effort to promote accurate diagnosis and treatment of sepsis as well as appropriate billing and coding.

Sepsis-3 defines sepsis as life-threatening organ dysfunction caused by a dysregulated host response to infection.

Sepsis-3 was developed because definitions for sepsis and septic shock were last revised in 2001. Since that time, considerable advances in pathobiology (changes in organ function, morphology, cell biology, biochemistry, immunology and circulation), management and epidemiology of sepsis have led to an update of previous sepsis definitions and are based on updated evidence based medicine.

Highmark Wholecare's position on sepsis is that Sepsis-1 and 2 lack sensitivity and specificity in defining sepsis. Sepsis-1 and 2 are based on Systemic Inflammatory Response (SIRS) criteria. SIRS does not, necessarily, indicate a dysregulated, life-threatening response. SIRS criteria are present in many hospitalized patients, including those who never develop infection and never incur adverse outcomes. Sepsis-3 is endorsed by 31 medical societies and provides the most clinically relevant definition of sepsis with a SOFA score of 2 or more as an adjunct in clinical diagnosis of sepsis.



Policy History

Date	Activity
02/01/2021	Policy Reviewed – Updated formatting
01/01/2022	Reviewed with no changes