
DME REPLACEMENT

Definition: DME is defined as equipment that serves a medical purpose, is able to withstand repeated use, and is appropriate for use in the home setting.

Policy

VCHCP covers DME replacement if the item has been in the member’s possession for its whole “lifetime”. The definition of lifetime varies depending on the type of equipment and would usually be determined by the manufacturer’s published lifetime recommendation.

“Replacement” refers to the replacement of one item with an identical or nearly identical item (e.g. one manual wheelchair for another; not to switch from a manual wheelchair to an electric wheelchair or a motorized scooter).

If the patient wants a different kind of equipment, the physician must write a new order or prescription with an explanation of the medical need.

VCHCP will replace DME if:

1. the DME has been in use for more than the expected lifetime of the equipment (usually at least 5 yrs) and it has been determined that the equipment cannot be repaired or the cost to repair exceeds 60 percent of the cost of replacement.
2. the DME has been in continuous use by the member only
3. DME that fails prior to its life expectancy may be on manufacturer warranty and may be replaced by the manufacturer.
4. DME that sustains irreparable wear, damage or loss due to events beyond the member’s control may be considered for repair or replacement by the Plan upon the receipt of a doctor’s letter documenting the medical need for replacement. If the cost of repair of the equipment exceeds 60 percent of the cost to replace the item, the item would be replaced. Repair or replacement in these circumstances would require 50% co-pay by the member.
5. DME which is damaged or lost other than as specified above will not be replaced by the Ventura County Health Care Plan.

VCHCP reserves the right to retain the old DME.

The above policy is based on the following references:

Medical Policy: DME Replacement

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1. <https://www.medicare.gov/basics/your-medicare-rights>
2. *Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services Medicare Coverage for Durable Medical Equipment and Other Devices. Available at <https://www.medicare.gov/sites/default/files/2024-03/11045-Medicare-Coverage-of-DME-and-Other-Devices.pdf>*

Attachments: None

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2/20/25	Yes	Howard Taekman, MD and Robert Sterling, MD	Added definition of DME. References updated