



January 19, 2022

Jennifer Baumann
Policy Specialist
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

RE: 2130-CSHCS: Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) Prior Authorization

Dear Ms. Baumann,

On behalf of Michiganders living with cystic fibrosis (CF), we write to express our support for allowing Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) members to receive reimbursement for non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) without first obtaining written approval from their local health department. Waiving this requirement will reduce administrative barriers to non-emergency ground transportation and lodging, improving access to this vital benefit.

Cystic fibrosis is a life-threatening genetic disease that affects more than 30,000 children and adults in the United States, including nearly 1,150 people in Michigan. Cystic fibrosis causes the body to produce thick, sticky mucus that clogs the lungs and digestive system, which can lead to serious infections. As a complex, multi-system condition, CF requires targeted, specialized treatment and medications, and most people with CF receive care at accredited care centers that provide multidisciplinary, coordinated care. Due to the high cost of care and treatments, many people with cystic fibrosis depend on multiple forms of coverage and financial assistance, including CSHCS, to afford their care.

The NEMT benefit facilitates access to care for individuals who otherwise may not have a reliable, affordable way to get to and from medical appointments. In a survey conducted by researchers at George Washington University of over 1,800 people living with CF and their families, one in ten respondents reported that the cost of transportation prevented them from visiting their care center in 2019. Removing the requirement that enrollees obtain written approval from their local health department prior to travel will help expedite access to this service and ensure that enrollees do not delay or forego care due to transportation costs. Continuous, uninterrupted care is especially important for individuals with CF due to the progressive nature of the disease, as disruptions in care can lead to irreversible lung damage, costly hospitalizations, and early death.

We applaud CSHCS for taking steps to reduce administrative burdens for NEMT services. The CF Foundation is grateful for the support CSHCS provides to Michiganders with cystic fibrosis and appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on this proposed policy.

Sincerely,

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