
CHAPTER 28: FREE-STANDING BIRTHING CENTERS

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COVERED SERVICES

A free-standing birthing center (FSBC) is any distinct entity that operates exclusively for the purpose of providing vaginal delivery services to those beneficiaries not requiring hospitalization and in which the expected duration of services would not exceed 24 hours following an admission. The services must be medically necessary and furnished to an eligible pregnant woman by, or under, the direction of an obstetrician, family practitioner, certified nurse midwife or licensed midwife in a facility which is not part of a hospital, but which is organized and operated to provide delivery care to beneficiaries.

FSBCs are reimbursed a flat fee for labor and low-risk delivery services that include all charges by the facility for the care of the beneficiary while the beneficiary is in the center.

Services are provided by the attending practitioner from the time of the pregnant woman's admission through the birth and the immediate postpartum period.

Non-Covered Services

1. Neither general nor epidural anesthesia shall be provided in the birthing center; and
2. Assessments for active labor that do not result in admission to the birthing center.

Exclusions

FSBC services do not include items and services for which payment may be made under other provisions. FSBC services do not include:

1. Physician services;
2. Lab and x-ray not directly related to the delivery;
3. Diagnostic procedures (other than those directly related to performance of the delivery);
4. Ambulance services; or
5. Durable medical equipment for use in the beneficiary's home.