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CHAPTER 10: MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION

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SECTION 10.1: NEMT - COVERED SERVICES

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**COVERED SERVICES**

The transportation broker shall cover Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT), including Non-Emergency Ambulance Transportation (NEAT), for the least costly means of transportation available that accommodates the level of service required by the beneficiary to and/or from providers of routine Medicaid covered services for Medicaid beneficiaries.

Transportation requirements in this section apply to both NEMT and NEAT services unless otherwise specified (i.e., NEMT-specific guidance applies only to non-ambulance transportation). See the *Ambulance* section of this Chapter of the Louisiana Medicaid Provider Manual for additional guidelines specific to NEAT. Services shall be provided in accordance with the Louisiana Administrative Code, Title 50, Part XXVII, Chapter 5.

NEMT, and NEAT when scheduled through the transportation broker, must be within the beneficiary's transportation service area. The transportation service area is defined as the area that complies with the geographic access standards outlined in the **Provider Network Companion Guide**.

Eligible expenses include the following when necessary to ensure the delivery of medically necessary services:

- Transportation for the beneficiary and one attendant; and
- Meals and lodging while en route to and from medical care and while receiving medical care.

The following must be established by the transportation broker:

- The transportation broker must establish a reimbursement policy that does not exceed per diem rates established by the U.S. General Services Administration [\[link\]](#);
- The transportation broker must allow for meals and lodging, for each trip that are not otherwise covered in the inpatient per diem, primary insurance, or other payer source; and
- If the transportation broker denies meals and lodging services to a beneficiary who requests these services, the member must receive a written notice of denial explaining the reason for denial and the member's right to request a fair hearing to appeal the decision.

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Scheduled trips in which no transportation of the beneficiary occurs are not billable.

Reimbursement to transportation providers shall be no less than the published Medicaid fee-for-service (FFS) rate in effect on the date of service, unless mutually agreed to by the transportation broker and the transportation provider in the provider agreement.

**Exceptions to Standards**

Beneficiaries may seek medically necessary services in another state when it is the nearest option available. All non-emergency out-of-state transportation must be prior approved by the transportation broker. The transportation broker may approve transportation to out-of-state medical care only if the beneficiary has been granted approval to receive medical treatment out of state.

Beneficiaries are linked to specific Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) locations; however, beneficiaries may “guest dose” at other clinics. The transportation broker shall cover transportation to any OTP location, not just the location to which the beneficiary is linked or that is in the beneficiary’s home parish or region.

If the beneficiary chooses to travel outside of the transportation service area in order to access a preferred healthcare provider, the transportation broker shall submit a written request for exception to LDH for approval. If LDH denies the request, the transportation broker should deny the request and will not be reimbursed for the trip.

The transportation broker must maintain documentation to support exceptions to standards and submit documentation to LDH upon request.

**Exclusions**

The transportation broker shall not be reimbursed for transportation to or from the following locations:

- Pharmacies;
- Nursing facilities;
- Hospice care; or

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- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) service appointments at the Office of Public Health.

**Note: This is not an exclusive list.**

### **Commercial Air Transportation for Out-of-State Care**

The transportation broker may approve NEMT on commercial airlines for out-of-state trips when no comparable healthcare services can be provided in Louisiana, and the risk to the beneficiary's health is grave if transported by other means. The transportation broker shall contact the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) if it determines that air travel is required, as commercial air transportation requires prior approval. All out-of-state medical care must be prior approved by the LDH fiscal intermediary. Transportation may be included in the prior authorization for medical services. Approval shall be contingent on the treating physician's confirmation that there are no negative impacts to the health and safety of the beneficiary by utilizing commercial air transportation.

Air travel for the beneficiary plus a maximum of one attendant, if medically necessary or if the beneficiary is a child, shall be reimbursed for the lowest, refundable, coach/economy class fare. Upgrades (e.g., fare class or seat) and additional costs (e.g., in-flight refreshments) shall not be reimbursed.