

Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access Report Card

New York

Estimated Number of Individuals Living with Hepatitis C: 223,700¹



Grade	Summary
<p>B-</p>	<p>Liver Damage (Fibrosis) Restrictions: Fee-For-Service (FFS) does not have liver damage requirements. Six Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), Excellus Health Plan, HealthNow New York, New York State Catholic Health Plan, UnitedHealthcare, WellCare and YourCare Health Plan, follow FFS liver damage criteria. Two MCOs, Healthfirst PHSP and MetroPlus Health Plan, specifically reference the American Association for the Study of Liver Disease/Infectious Disease Society of America (AASLD/IDSA) guidelines in their prior authorization (PA) criteria but don't specify liver damage requirements. Seven MCOs, Affinity Health Plan, Capital District Physicians Health Plan, Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York, HealthPlus LLC, Independent Health Association, MVP Health Plan, and Molina Healthcare, have limited coverage information publicly available and their liver damage requirements are unclear. One MCO, New York-Presbyterian Community Health Plan, does not provide any coverage information publicly.</p> <p>Sobriety Restrictions: FFS requires screening for substance and alcohol use and assurance for treatment readiness. Five MCOs, Excellus Health Plan, HealthNow New York, New York State Catholic Health Plan, UnitedHealthcare and YourCare Health Plan, follow FFS sobriety criteria. One MCO, WellCare, requires a urine toxicology screen 30 days before treatment. Two MCOs, Healthfirst PHSP and MetroPlus Health Plan, specifically reference the AASLD/IDSA guidelines in their PA criteria but don't specify sobriety requirements. Seven MCOs, Affinity Health Plan, Capital District Physicians Health Plan, Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York, HealthPlus LLC, Independent Health Association, MVP Health Plan, and Molina Healthcare, have limited coverage information publicly available and their requirements are unclear. One MCO, New York-Presbyterian Community Health Plan, does not provide any coverage information publicly.</p> <p>Prescriber Restrictions: FFS requires a prescription to be written by or in consultation with a specialist. Five MCOs, Excellus Health Plan HealthNow New York, New York State Catholic Health Plan, UnitedHealthcare and YourCare Health Plan, follow FFS prescriber criteria. Two MCOs, Healthfirst PHSP and MetroPlus Health Plan, specifically reference the AASLD/IDSA guidelines in their PA criteria but don't specify prescriber requirements. WellCare does not specify any prescriber requirements. Seven MCOs, Affinity Health Plan, Capital District Physicians Health Plan, Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York, HealthPlus LLC, Independent Health Association, MVP Health Plan, and Molina Healthcare, have limited coverage information publicly available and their requirements are unclear. One MCO, New York-Presbyterian Community Health Plan, does not provide any coverage information publicly.</p> <p>Recommendations to Improve Patient Access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove sobriety and prescriber restrictions. • Ensure coverage parity across the FFS and MCO programs and transparency regarding hepatitis C coverage criteria. <p><i>Grade Rationale: New York Medicaid has made strides in improving access to hepatitis C medications due in large part to very strong patient advocacy. Medicaid FFS has no liver damage requirements, screening and counseling for alcohol and substance use, and a prescription must be written by or in consultation with a specialist. Five MCOs are known to apply the same coverage criteria as FFS in all categories. However, most MCOs provide very little coverage information publicly and their requirements are unclear. With minimal changes, New York could have open access to hepatitis C treatment. Because of the lack of publicly available information for most MCOs, a "minus" has been added to the state's "B" grade.</i></p>

Background

As of May 2017, New York had 6,433,031 individuals enrolled in Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program.² New York operates a Fee-For-Service (FFS) program and contracts with Managed Care Organizations (MCOs). Most beneficiaries, 77 percent, are enrolled in a MCO plan and the remaining 23 percent participate in FFS.³ The MCO plans available vary by county and include plans for special needs or populations such as HIV and long-term care.⁴ The state contracts with a variety of national, for-profit, non-profit, and local health plans including: Affinity Health Plan, Capital District Physicians Health Plan, Excellus Health Plan, Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York,

Healthfirst PHSP, HealthNow New York, HealthPlus LLC, Independent Health Association, MetroPlus Health Plan, MVP Health Plan, New York State Catholic Health Plan (Fidelis Care), Molina Healthcare, New York-Presbyterian Community Health Plan, UnitedHealthcare (UHC), WellCare and YourCare Health Plan.⁵ Two MCO plans note in their hepatitis C coverage criteria that New York has mandated coverage criteria; however, an official communication by the Medicaid program is not available.⁶

State of Medicaid Hepatitis C Treatment Access

Due to aggressive and persistent patient advocacy New York Medicaid has relaxed its hepatitis C coverage restrictions for FFS and most MCO programs appear to follow FFS requirements.⁷ However, several MCOs have very little hepatitis C coverage information publicly available. FFS requires a separate prior authorization (PA) form for each Direct-Acting Antiviral (DAA) regimen.⁸ FFS established a *Chronic Hepatitis C (CHC) Infection Checklist for Prior Authorization* to support the PA process.⁹ FFS requires a diagnosis of chronic hepatitis C and screening for alcohol and substance use.¹⁰ A prescription must be written by a specialist or health care practitioner experienced and trained in hepatitis C treatment or a health care practitioner under the direct supervision of a designated specialist.¹¹ Prescribers must also conduct a treatment readiness assessment using a validated drug and alcohol screening tool.¹² Additionally, prescribers must screen for hepatitis B before initiating hepatitis C treatment.¹³ A woman of child-bearing age must have a negative pregnancy screen 30 days prior to initiating therapy or a medical record documenting pregnancy status.¹⁴ FFS Medicaid established the following DAAs as preferred: Epclusa (Genotypes 2 & 3), Harvoni, Technivie, Viekira Pak, Viekira XR and Zepatier; and non-preferred: Daklinza, Olysio and Sovaldi.¹⁵

Affinity Health Plan requires PA for hepatitis C medications and includes Epclusa (Genotypes 2 & 3), Harvoni (Genotypes 1, 4, 5 & 6) and Zepatier (Genotypes 1 & 4) on its Preferred Drug List (PDL).¹⁶ Specific coverage requirements for hepatitis are not listed. However, the plan's website does state that "Affinity Health Plan has recently expanded coverage of Hepatitis C treatment. If you currently have AffinityAccess and were denied coverage in the past, you may now be eligible for coverage."¹⁷

Capital District Physicians Health Plan requires PA, however, the form does not specify any liver damage, sobriety or prescriber requirements.¹⁸ The plan's website states, "effective May 13, 2016, CDPHP expanded its coverage of chronic Hepatitis C treatment. Coverage will no longer be denied based on fibrosis level or drug or alcohol use."¹⁹

Excellus Health Plan requires PA and a specialty pharmacy to dispense the regimen.²⁰ Excellus imposes the same requirements as FFS.²¹ A patient must demonstrate treatment readiness and the ability to adhere to the drug regimen.²² The prescriber must evaluate readiness by utilizing a validated screening/assessment tool.²³ A prescription must be by a specialist or by a provider who has received additional training in the treatment and management of hepatitis C.²⁴ Excellus includes Epclusa, Sovaldi and Zepatier on its PDL.²⁵

Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York requires PA, imposes quantity limits and includes Epclusa, Harvoni and Sovaldi on its formulary.²⁶ Prescriptions must be filled at a specialty pharmacy.²⁷ No other hepatitis C coverage information is publicly available.²⁸

Healthfirst PHSP's formulary includes Epclusa (Genotypes 2, 3, 5, & 6) and Zepatier (Genotypes 1 & 4).²⁹ Healthfirst's formulary references the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases/Infectious Disease Society of America (AASLD/IDSA) treatment guidelines but does not provide any other specific coverage information.³⁰

HealthNow New York requires PA for each regimen requested as well as supporting clinical documentation.³¹ HealthNow New York imposes the same requirements as FFS.³² A beneficiary must be 18-years-old (except beneficiaries over 12-years-old could be approved for Harvoni or Sovaldi) and have a diagnosis of chronic hepatitis C to be eligible for treatment.³³ A prescription must be written by or in consultation with a specialist as defined by FFS.³⁴ HealthNow New York also imposes quantity limits which vary depending on the prescribed regimen.³⁵ Harvoni and Sovaldi are established as the preferred agents.³⁶

HealthPlus LLC's PDL includes Epclusa, Sovaldi and Zepatier.³⁷ Additionally, the PA criteria state that "New York has state mandated criteria."³⁸ No other coverage information is publicly available.³⁹

Independent Health Association requires PA and includes Epclusa and Harvoni on its formulary.⁴⁰ No other coverage information is publicly available.⁴¹

MetroPlus Health Plan requires PA and includes Epclusa (Genotypes 2, 3, 5, & 6) and Zepatier (Genotypes 1 & 4) as preferred regimens.⁴² The formulary also references AASLD/IDSA guidelines for the management of chronic hepatitis C.⁴³ However, no other coverage requirements are available.⁴⁴

MVP Health Plan requires PA and hepatitis C regimens must be filled at a CVS Specialty Pharmacy.⁴⁵ The PDL includes Epclusa, Harvoni, Sovaldi and Zepatier.⁴⁶ MVP does not provide any other hepatitis C coverage information publicly.⁴⁷

New York State Catholic Health Plan (Fidelis Care) requires PA and states that the "information requested as per criteria developed by the New York State Department of Health Drug Utilization Review Board (NYSDOH DURB)."⁴⁸ The PA does not list specific liver damage or sobriety requirements but the criteria listed are similar to FFS.⁴⁹ A prescription must be written by or in consultation with a specialist.⁵⁰ Additionally, a beneficiary must demonstrate "readiness, willingness, and ability to adhere to the requested drug regimen."⁵¹ The PA further states that a "lapse in therapy of 14 days is grounds for Fidelis Care to discontinue treatment."⁵² A beneficiary must verbally or in writing commit to the "planned course of treatment, including anticipated blood tests and visits during and after treatment."⁵³ Finally, the patient

must “acknowledge that lost, stolen, destroyed, or inappropriately used supplies are not subject to replacement by Fidelis Care” and the prescriber must acknowledge all of the above patient requirements.⁵⁴ Mavyret is listed on the plan’s formulary as the preferred agent.⁵⁵

Syracuse Community Health Center Managed Care Holding Company (Total Care) is listed by New York state as a contracted MCO. However, the plan was acquired by Molina Healthcare in 2016 and renamed.⁵⁶ Molina Healthcare requires PA and imposes quantity limits.⁵⁷ The PDL includes Technivie and Zepatier.⁵⁸ Pharmacy benefits are managed by Express Scripts; however, more detailed hepatitis C coverage criteria is not available.⁵⁹

New York-Presbyterian Community Health Plan does not provide any plan information publicly.

UHC requires PA and imposes the same coverage criteria as FFS.⁶⁰ The plan does not impose any liver damage requirements.⁶¹ The prescriber must screen for alcohol and substance use utilizing a validated screening tool.⁶² A prescription must be written by or in consultation with a specialist.⁶³ The *Specialty Drug List* includes: Daklinza, Harvoni, Olysio, Sovaldi, Technivie and Zepatier.⁶⁴

WellCare of New York requires PA and a diagnosis of chronic hepatitis C.⁶⁵ However, the plan’s sobriety requirements are more stringent than FFS. Beneficiaries who are active substance or alcohol users will be considered for therapy on a case-by-case basis and care should be coordinated with a substance use treatment specialist.⁶⁶ A urine toxicology screen must be conducted within 30 days prior to treatment.⁶⁷ The prescriber must provide adherence counseling and the beneficiary must agree to adhere to and complete the prescribed drug regimen.⁶⁸ Specific prescriber requirements are not included.⁶⁹ Prescriptions must be filled at a specialty pharmacy.⁷⁰ WellCare’s Preferred Drug List includes Eplclusa and Zepatier.⁷¹

YourCare Health Plan requires PA, the beneficiary to be at least 18-years-old and a diagnosis of chronic hepatitis C or documentation of high risk conditions for liver-related complications.⁷² The *Medical Policy* specifically states that “while disease severity criteria or Fibrosis scores are not considered a threshold for coverage decisions, documentation of those scores is requested to aid in the evaluation and for case reporting and documentation.”⁷³ High risk conditions that would qualify a beneficiary for treatment include: HIV coinfection; hepatitis B with detectable viremia; other coexistent liver disease; Type 2 diabetes (with evidence of F1 or greater); Porphyria cutanea tarda; liver transplant patients; debilitating fatigue impacting quality of life (e.g., secondary to extrahepatic manifestations and/or liver disease); healthcare workers whose daily activities put them in contact with blood and/or needles or other extrahepatic manifestations.⁷⁴ A prescription must be written by or in consultation with a “gastroenterologist, hepatologist, infectious disease specialist, or HCV/HIV specialist.”⁷⁵ The *Medical Policy* further elaborates that “treatment may also be prescribed by a Primary Care Provider if they have received additional training in the treatment and management of Hepatitis C and/or are working in conjunction with one of the above specialists.”⁷⁶ The prescriber must “attest to the patient’s demonstrated treatment readiness including the ability to adhere to prescribed treatment regimen” and utilize a validated screening tool.⁷⁷ The Medical Policy further stipulates that “while not being used to determine drug coverage, the provider will be asked to provide an assessment if the patient is drug/alcohol abuse free and has been for the preceding 3 months.” Additionally, patients with limited life expectancy of less than 12 months due to non-liver related comorbidities will not be approved for treatment.⁷⁸ Beneficiaries who have previously been cured who are re-infected will not be approved for treatment.⁷⁹ YourCare Health Plan covers the following DAAs: Eplclusa (preferred for Genotypes 2, 3, 5 & 6); Zepatier (preferred for Genotypes 1 & 4); Harvoni (Genotypes 1, 4, 5 & 6); Viekira XR, Viekira XR (Genotype 1) and coverage for Daklinza, Sovaldi and Technivie require documentations of failure of clinical appropriateness or inability to tolerate Eplclusa or Zepatier.⁸⁰

Liver Damage (Fibrosis) Restrictions

New York FFS requires a diagnosis of chronic hepatitis C but does not have liver damage requirements.⁸¹

Excellus, HealthNow New York, and WellCare require a diagnosis of chronic hepatitis C but do not have liver damage requirements.⁸²

Fidelis Care and UHC do not list specific liver damage requirements.⁸³

YourCare Health Plan requires a diagnosis of chronic hepatitis C or documentation of high risk conditions for liver-related complications but does not have liver damage requirements.⁸⁴

Healthfirst and MetroPlus Health Plan specifically reference AASLD/IDSA guidelines in their PA criteria but do not specify liver damage requirements.

Affinity, Capital District Physicians, Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York, Empire BCBS, Independent Health Association, MVP Health Plan, Molina Healthcare have limited coverage information publicly available and their requirements are unclear.

New York-Presbyterian Community Health Plan does not provide any coverage information publicly.

Sobriety Restrictions

New York FFS requires a prescriber evaluation of a patient’s readiness to begin treatment including the individual’s “drug and alcohol abuse potential.”⁸⁵ The prescriber must use a validated screening tool including Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)/Health Research Service Administration (HRSA) Center for Integrated Health Solutions Drug & Alcohol Screening Tools or Psychosocial Readiness Evaluation and Preparation for Hepatitis C Treatment (PREP-C).⁸⁶

Excellus, HealthNow New York, UHC and YourCare Health Plan impose the same sobriety requirements as FFS.⁸⁷

Fidelis Care does not list specific sobriety requirements but beneficiaries must demonstrate “readiness, willingness, and ability to adhere to the requested drug regimen.”⁸⁸ A beneficiary must verbally or in writing commit to the “planned course of treatment, including anticipated blood tests and visits during and after treatment.”⁸⁹

Healthfirst and MetroPlus Health Plan specifically reference AASLD/IDSA guidelines in their PA criteria but do not specify sobriety requirements.

WellCare requires active substance or alcohol users to be considered for therapy on a case-by-case basis and care should be coordinated with a substance use treatment specialist.⁹⁰ Additionally, WellCare requires a urine toxicology screen must be conducted within 30 days prior to treatment.⁹¹

Affinity, Capital District Physicians, Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York, Empire BCBS, Independent Health Association, MVP Health Plan, Molina Healthcare have limited coverage information publicly available and their requirements are unclear.

New York-Presbyterian Community Health Plan does not provide any coverage information publicly.

Prescriber Restrictions

New York FFS requires a prescription be written by a hepatologist, gastroenterologist, infectious disease specialist or transplant physician or health care practitioner experience and trained in hepatitis C treatment or a health care practitioner under the direct supervision of a listed specialist.⁹² FFS clarifies that experience of non-specialists is defined as the “management and treatment of at least 10 patients with hepatitis C infection within the past 12 months and at least 10 hepatitis C-related Certified Medical Education (CME) credits in the last 12 months.”⁹³ Additionally, non-specialists or practitioners working in partnership with a specialist may request approval by filling out and submitting a *Medicaid Hepatitis C Practitioner Information Request Form*.⁹⁴ FFS posts a list of Medicaid providers who meet their criteria.⁹⁵ Prescribers must also conduct a treatment readiness assessment using a validated drug and alcohol screening tool.⁹⁶

UHC requires a prescription to be written by a hepatologist, gastroenterologist, infectious disease or transplant physician or by a healthcare practitioner who is either under the direct supervision of a specialist or is experienced and trained in hepatitis C treatment.⁹⁷

Excellus, HealthNow and Fidelis Care New York impose the same prescriber requirements as FFS.⁹⁸ Neither Excellus nor HealthNow indicate if physicians are required to apply and become a state approved hepatitis C prescriber.⁹⁹

YourCare Health Plan requires a prescription by or in consultation with a specialist or primary care provider who has received additional training in the treatment and management of hepatitis C.¹⁰⁰

Healthfirst and MetroPlus Health Plan specifically reference AASLD/IDSA guidelines in their PA criteria but do not specify prescriber requirements.

WellCare does not specify any prescribing requirements.¹⁰¹

Affinity, Capital District Physicians, Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York, Empire BCBS, Independent Health Association, MVP Health Plan, Molina Healthcare have limited coverage information publicly available and their requirements are unclear.

New York-Presbyterian Community Health Plan does not provide any coverage information publicly.

Points of Contact for Questions & Concerns about New York’s State of Medicaid Hepatitis C Access

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² Medicaid and CHIP in New York, By-State, Medicaid.gov (Accessed August 2017): <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/by-state/stateprofile.html?state=new-york>

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https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/managed_care/pdf/hmo_dir.pdf; See also: Managed Care Organization Directory, Department of Health (Accessed August 2017):

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https://medipproviders.empireblue.com/ClinicalPharmacyPolicies/PHARM_ALL_Epclusa.pdf; See also: Clinical Pharmacy Policies, NY Providers, Empire BCBS (Accessed August 2017):

<https://medipproviders.empireblue.com/ny/pages/clinical-pharmacy-policies.aspx>

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- ¹⁰ New York State Medicaid Fee-For-Service Pharmacy Programs, Department of Health, Updated: July 20, 2017 (Accessed August 2017): https://newyork.fhsc.com/downloads/providers/NYRx_PDP_PDL.pdf; See also: New York State Medicaid Drug Utilization Review (DUR) Board Meeting Summary for September 15, 2016 (Accessed August 2017): https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/dur/meetings/2016/09/summary_durb.pdf; Meeting Summaries, Drug Utilization Review, Department of Health (Accessed August): https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/dur/meetings/2016/
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- ¹² Ibid. Chronic Hepatitis C (CHC) Infection Check List for Prior Authorization Requests, Department of Health, March 2017; Note: the state recommends usage of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) / Health Research Service Administration (HRSA) Center for Integrated Health Solutions: Drug & Alcohol Screening Tools available at: <http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/clinical-practice/screening-tools#drugs> or Psychosocial Readiness Evaluation and Preparation for Hepatitis C Treatment (PREP-C) available at: <http://prep.org/>; See also: New York State Medicaid Fee-For-Service Pharmacy Programs, Department of Health, Updated: July 20, 2017
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- ²¹ Ibid. Drug Prior Authorization Form, Hepatitis C, Excellus BlueCross Blue Shield, Effective: 08/2017
- ²² Ibid. Drug Prior Authorization Form, Hepatitis C, Excellus BlueCross Blue Shield, Effective: 08/2017
- ²³ Ibid. Drug Prior Authorization Form, Hepatitis C, Excellus BlueCross Blue Shield, Effective: 08/2017
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- ²⁵ BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York, Version Date: 08/01/2017 (Accessed August 2017): https://www.mycbswny.com/wny-members/nyny_wny_pdl.pdf
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