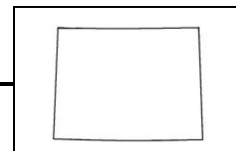


Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access Report Card

Colorado

Estimated Number of Individuals Living with Hepatitis C: 36,300¹



Grade	Summary
<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: #8B4513;">A-</p>	<p>Liver Damage (Fibrosis) Restrictions: Colorado Primary Care Case Management (PCCM) and Denver Health Medicaid Choice Managed Care Organization (MCO) do not impose liver damage restrictions. Rocky Mountain Health Plan does not publish hepatitis C clinical coverage criteria.</p> <p>Sobriety Restrictions: Colorado PCCM and Denver Health Medicaid Choice MCO do not impose sobriety restrictions. Rocky Mountain Health Plan does not publish hepatitis C clinical coverage criteria.</p> <p>Prescriber Restrictions: Colorado PCCM allows primary care providers who have received sufficient education to prescribe treatment, or treatment must be prescribed in consultation with an expert. Denver Health Medicaid Choice MCO requires a prescription to be written by or in consultation with a gastroenterologist, infectious disease, hepatologist or HIV specialist. Rocky Mountain Health Plan does not publish hepatitis C clinical coverage criteria.</p> <p>Recommendations to Improve Patient Access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove prescriber requirements. • Ensure transparency regarding hepatitis C coverage criteria and parity between PCCM and MCO programs. • Remove prior authorization for patients who qualify for simplified treatment. <p><i>Grade Rationale: Colorado has improved treatment access by removing fibrosis and sobriety requirements and expanding the number of providers who can prescribe treatment. Colorado could improve their grade by fully removing prescriber restrictions and ensuring parity between the two plans that are not beholden to the state's coverage criteria.</i></p>

Background

As of June 2021, Colorado had 1,578,865 individuals enrolled in Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).² Colorado's Medicaid program is called Health First Colorado. The state operates a Primary Care Case Management (PCCM) program known as the Accountable Care Collaborative and contracts with one managed care organization (MCO), Denver Health Medicaid Choice.³ The PCCM program is divided into seven geographic Regional Care Collaborative Organizations.⁴ Denver Health Medicaid Choice covers Medicaid-eligible individuals who live in a limited geographic area including Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, and Jefferson Counties.⁵ Over 88 percent of beneficiaries are enrolled in the PCCM program and 11 percent in the MCO plan.⁶ The Colorado Medicaid Preferred Drug List (PDL) applies to all 1.36 million PCCM enrollees, except Rocky Mountain Health Plan, which covers 46,000 lives. The PDL also does not apply to Denver Health Medicaid Choice, which covers 161,869 lives.^{7,8}

State of Medicaid Hepatitis C Treatment Access

In early 2016, Colorado's PCCM program required patients to have severe liver damage (F3 or greater) and six months of sobriety from alcohol or substances to access treatment.⁹ Additionally, a patient with a history of use had to submit toxicology screens throughout treatment.¹⁰ In December 2016, Colorado changed its hepatitis C coverage criteria allowing individuals with at least moderate liver damage (F2 or greater) to qualify for treatment and reduced the sobriety restrictions.¹¹

A legal challenge was started against Colorado's liver damage requirement in September 2016.¹² Attorneys for the ACLU of Colorado and the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation of Harvard Law School filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of Colorado Medicaid beneficiaries being denied treatment due to the state's requirement that they demonstrate at least moderate liver damage (F2 or greater) under the theory that Colorado is not complying with federal law that requires state Medicaid programs to pay for medically necessary treatment.¹³ The victory of this case led to the state eliminating its liver damage requirement effective January 1, 2018.¹⁴

Colorado PCCM no longer inquires about substance use history, though the prescriber must attest that the patient has been counseled about adherence. Prescriptions must be written in consultation with an expert or by a primary care provider who attests to having sufficient education to safely prescribe hepatitis C treatment. Treatment for acute hepatitis C may be prescribed at the prescriber's discretion. Requests for retreatment are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Preferred drugs include Eplclusa, Harvoni, Mavyret, and Vosevi.¹⁵

Denver Health Medicaid Choice publishes separate, more stringent coverage criteria for hepatitis C treatment. Treatment must be prescribed by or in consultation with a gastroenterologist, hepatologist infectious disease specialist, or HIV specialist. Criteria includes confirmation that the patient is willing to adhere to treatment requirements, noting that patients who terminated previous HCV treatment

due to nonmedical reasons will not be considered for retreatment. Requests will not be approved if there is “evidence of medication non-adherence to treatment of concurrent medical diseases (e.g. poorly controlled DM, severe HTN, heart failure, significant CAD, COPD, thyroid disease),” or “concurrent psychiatric illness without strong primary care physician and psychiatric support.” Preferred products include Eplusa and Harvoni.¹⁶

Rocky Mountain Health Plan does not publish hepatitis C clinical coverage criteria.¹⁷

Liver Damage (Fibrosis) Restrictions

Colorado PCCM does not impose liver damage requirements.¹⁸

Denver Health Medicaid Choice does not impose liver damage requirements. The MCO’s PA does not stipulate any liver damage criteria; however, it does request if the patient has confirmation of either no cirrhosis or compensated cirrhosis.¹⁹

Rocky Mountain Health Plan does not publish hepatitis C clinical coverage criteria.²⁰

Sobriety Restrictions

Colorado PCCM does not impose sobriety restrictions.²¹

Denver Health Medicaid Choice does not appear to impose sobriety requirements. However, the MCO does state that treatment will not be approved if a patient has a “concurrent psychiatric illness and does not have strong primary care physician and psychiatric support.”²²

Rocky Mountain Health Plan does not publish hepatitis C clinical coverage criteria.²³

Prescriber Restrictions

Colorado PCCM requires that treatment be “prescribed either through consultation with an expert in hepatitis C treatment OR the primary care provider attests to having received sufficient education to safely prescribe the listed hepatitis C medications.”²⁴

Denver Health Medicaid Choice requires a prescription to be written by or in consultation with a gastroenterologist, infectious disease, hepatologist or HIV specialist.²⁵

Rocky Mountain Health Plan does not publish hepatitis C clinical coverage criteria.²⁶

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

Medicaid:²⁷ Tracy Johnson, Director, Colorado Department of Health Care & Financing

1570 Grant Street, Denver, CO 80203-1818; Telephone: (303) 866-5929; Email Address: tracy.johnson@state.co.us

Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) Committee:²⁸ Brittany Schock, PharmD, Program Administrator, Colorado Department of Health Policy and Financing

1570 Grant Street, Denver, CO 80203; Telephone: (303) 866-6371; Email Address: Brittany.Schock@state.co.us

¹ Colorado State Profile, HepVu (Accessed December 2021): <https://hepvu.org/state/colorado/>.

² Medicaid & CHIP in Colorado, By-State, Medicaid (Accessed December 2021): <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/by-state/stateprofile.html?state=colorado>.

³ Health First Colorado (Colorado’s Medicaid Program) Regional Organizations (Accessed December 2021): <https://www.healthfirstcolorado.com/health-first-colorado-regional-organizations/>.

⁴ Accountable Care Collaborative (ACC), Colorado Department of Health Policy & Financing (Accessed December 2021): <https://www.colorado.gov/hcpf/accountable-care-collaborative>; See also RCCO Contact Information: https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/Regional%20Care%20Collaborative%20Organization%20Customer%20Contacts_1.pdf; RCCOs by Region Map, Rocky Mountain Health Plans: <http://live-rocky.pantheon.io/sites/default/files/resource/RCCOs%20By%20Region.png>.

⁵ Medicaid Choice, Denver Health (Accessed December 2021): <https://www.denverhealthmedicalplan.org/medicaid-choice>.

⁶ Share of Medicaid Population Covered Under Different Delivery Systems, Medicaid Managed Care State Level Data, Medicaid Managed Care Market Tracker, State Health Facts, The Henry J Kaiser Family Foundation (Accessed December 2021): <http://kff.org/medicaid/state-indicator/share-of-medicaid-population-covered-under-different-delivery-systems/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>.

⁷ Preferred Drug List, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, Effective January 1, 2022 (Accessed December 2021): <https://hcpf.colorado.gov/sites/hcpf/files/01-01-22%20PDL%20v.2.pdf>

⁸ December FY 2021-22 Medical Premiums Expenditure and Caseload Report, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (Accessed December 2021): <https://hcpf.colorado.gov/sites/hcpf/files/2021%20December%2C%20Joint%20Budget%20Committee%20Monthly%20Premiums%20Report%20%28Clean%20Version%29.pdf>; See also Premiums, Expenditures, and Caseload Reports: <https://hcpf.colorado.gov/premiums-expenditures-and-caseload-reports>.

⁹ Colorado Hepatitis C Prior Authorization Request Form, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (Version: March 1, 2016): No longer available.

¹⁰ Colorado Hepatitis C Prior Authorization Request Form, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (Version: March 1, 2016): No longer available.

¹¹ Preferred Drug List, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (Effective: 1/1/2018): No longer available.

¹² Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation, Harvard Law School, ACLU and CHLPI File Suit Against Colorado Medicaid for HCV Restrictions (Accessed December 2021): <https://www.aclu.org/press-releases/aclu-files-class-action-lawsuit-against-colorado-medicaid-over-unlawful-hepatitis-c>.

¹³ Ibid. Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation, Harvard Law School, ACLU and CHLPI File Suit Against Colorado Medicaid for HCV Restrictions (Accessed December 2021).

¹⁴ Colorado Medicaid to Lift Restrictions on Hepatitis C Treatment in 2018, Hep (Accessed December 2021), <https://www.hepmag.com/article/colorado-medicaid-lift-restrictions-hepatitis-c-treatment-2018>.

¹⁵ Preferred Drug List, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, Effective January 1, 2022 (Accessed December 2021): <https://hcpf.colorado.gov/sites/hcpf/files/01-01-22%20PDL%20v.2.pdf>; See also Colorado Hepatitis C Prior Authorization Request Form, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, Effective January 1, 2022 (Accessed December 2021): <https://hcpf.colorado.gov/sites/hcpf/files/Hep%20C%20PAR%202022.pdf>.

¹⁶ Prior Authorization Approval Criteria, Denver Health Medicaid Choice, Updated November 2021 (Accessed December 2021): https://www.denverhealthmedicalplan.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/Medicaid%20Choice.CHP%20Prior%20Authorization%20Criteria_1Q2022.pdf.

¹⁷ Prior Authorization – Pharmacy, Rocky Mountain Health Plans Prime and CHP+ (Accessed December 2021): <https://www.rmhp.org/i-am-a-provider/provider-resources/pharmacy---prior-authorization>.

¹⁸ Ibid. Preferred Drug List, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, Effective January 1, 2022 (Accessed December 2021); See also Colorado Hepatitis C Prior Authorization Request Form, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, Effective January 1, 2022 (Accessed December 2021).

¹⁹ Ibid. Prior Authorization Approval Criteria, Denver Health Medicaid Choice, Updated November 2021 (Accessed December 2021).

²⁰ Prior Authorization – Pharmacy, Rocky Mountain Health Plans Prime and CHP+ (Accessed December 2021): <https://www.rmhp.org/i-am-a-provider/provider-resources/pharmacy---prior-authorization>.

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- ²¹ Ibid. Preferred Drug List, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, Effective January 1, 2022 (Accessed December 2021); See also Colorado Hepatitis C Prior Authorization Request Form, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, Effective January 1, 2022 (Accessed December 2021).
- ²² Ibid. Prior Authorization Approval Criteria, Denver Health Medicaid Choice, Updated November 2021 (Accessed December 2021).
- ²³ Ibid. Prior Authorization – Pharmacy, Rocky Mountain Health Plans Prime and CHP+ (Accessed December 2021).
- ²⁴ Ibid. Preferred Drug List, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, Effective January 1, 2022 (Accessed December 2021); See also Colorado Hepatitis C Prior Authorization Request Form, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, Effective January 1, 2022 (Accessed December 2021).
- ²⁵ Ibid. Prior Authorization Approval Criteria, Denver Health Medicaid Choice, Updated November 2021 (Accessed December 2021).
- ²⁶ Ibid. Prior Authorization – Pharmacy, Rocky Mountain Health Plans Prime and CHP+ (Accessed December 2021).
- ²⁷ Contact Information, National Association of Medicaid Directors (Accessed December 2021): <https://medicaidirectors.org/about/medicaid-directors/>.
- ²⁸ Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee (P&T), Colorado Department of Health Care and Financing (Accessed December 2021): <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/hcpf/pharmacy-and-therapeutics-committee>.