

2014 BWC Policy Alert

When durable medical equipment may be considered an artificial appliance

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Purpose

This BWC Policy Alert clarifies when durable medical equipment (DME) is also an artificial appliance and clarifies the appropriate funding source based on that determination.

Issue

The correct way to bill an item, which BWC polices define as both DME and an artificial appliance.

Discussion

BWC charges DME to the state fund, and artificial appliances to the surplus fund. Therefore, when considering payment for an item, the managed care organization must determine if BWC considers that item DME or an artificial appliance for that injured worker.

BWC defines DME in the *Durable Medical Equipment* policy as "equipment suitable for use outside of a medical facility that can withstand repeated use, can primarily and customarily serve a medical purpose, generally is not useful to a person in the absence of illness or injury, is appropriate for use in the home, and does not include disposable items." Walkers, canes, crutches and wheelchairs are examples that BWC includes within the definition of DME.

DME may also meet the definition of an artificial appliance. BWC considers DME, including items such as walkers, canes, crutches and wheelchairs, an artificial appliance only when all of the following criteria are met:

- o The injured worker received a scheduled loss or facial disfigurement award under Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 4123.57(B);
- o The need for the artificial appliance arises out of the ORC 4123.57(B) award;
- o The DME replaces a body part or function of a body part as determined by one of the statements below.
 - The Ohio State University hospital amputee clinic
 - The Rehabilitation Services Commission, now known as the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities agency
 - An amputee clinic approved by the administrator or the administrator's designee
 - A prescribing physician approved by the administrator or administrator's designee

Conclusion

BWC considers DME an artificial appliance only when every criteria set forth in the *Artificial Appliance policy* (and listed above for convenience) is met. In those cases, BWC considers the DME an artificial appliance and pays for it out of the surplus fund. In all other circumstances, BWC pays DME out of the state fund.

Reference Policy

Durable Medical Equipment Policy, MP-4-01

Artificial Appliance Requests Policy, MP-01-01

Miller Policy, MP-13-01