



TITLE:	AMBULATORY ASSIST DEVICES, WALKERS, CANES, AND CRUTCHES POLICY
POLICY #:	MM-PNP-052
VERSION #:	01
DEPARTMENT:	MEDICAL MANAGEMENT
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1. PURPOSE

This Policy addresses ambulatory assist devices: walkers, canes, and crutches.

2. SCOPE

Medical UM Department

3. DEFINITIONS

Mobility-related activities of daily living (Mradl) = toileting, bathing, feeding, dressing, grooming etc. Specific Criteria for Manual Wheelchair or other DME mobility devices.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

N/A

5. POLICY

Medical Necessity

Curative considers the canes, quad canes, and crutches durable medical equipment (DME) medically necessary if *all* of the following criteria are met:

Canes and Crutches

Canes and crutches if *all* of the following criteria are met:

- o The member has a mobility limitation that significantly impairs his/her ability to participate in one or more mobility-related activities of daily living (MRADL) in the home. The MRADLs to be considered in this and all other statements in this policy are toileting, feeding, dressing, grooming, and bathing performed in customary locations in the home. A mobility limitation is one that:
 - Prevents the member from accomplishing the MRADL entirely; *or*
 - Places the member at a determined heightened risk of morbidity or mortality secondary to the attempts to perform an MRADL; *or*
 - Prevents the member from completing the MRADL within a reasonable time; *and*

- The member is able to safely use the cane or crutch; *and*
- The functional mobility deficit can be sufficiently resolved by use of a cane or crutch.

Curative does not consider axillary (under-arm), articulated, spring-assisted crutches medically necessary because the clinical value of these specialized crutches have not been established. An axillary (under-arm), articulated, spring-assisted crutch describes an articulating crutch which has two crutch legs connected by a bar between them which helps propel the member forward.

Curative does not consider a sit-and-stand walking assistant type crutch medically necessary because its clinical value has not been established.

Note: Canes or crutches which contain a spring that reduces impact and vibration against the ground should be coded with the existing codes for canes or crutches.

Standard Walkers

A standard walker and related accessories if *all* of the following criteria are met:

- o The member has a mobility limitation that significantly impairs his/her ability to participate in one or more mobility-related activities of daily living (MRADL) in the home. A mobility limitation is one that:
 - Prevents the member from accomplishing the MRADL entirely, *or*
 - Places the member at determined heightened risk of morbidity or mortality secondary to the attempts to perform the MRADL, *or*
 - Prevents the member from completing the MRADL within a reasonable time; *and*
 - The member is able to safely use the walker; *and*
 - The functional mobility deficit can be sufficiently resolved with the use of a walker.

A standard walker may include wheels and glide-type brakes. A wheeled walker is one with 2, 3, or 4 wheels. The wheels may be fixed or swivel. It may be fixed height or adjustable height. It may or may not include glide-type brakes (or equivalent).

A glide-type brake consists of a spring mechanism (or equivalent), which raises the leg post of the walker off the ground when the member is not pushing down on the frame.

Pediatric Walkers and Crawlers

Pediatric crawlers as DME for disabled children.

The Mulholland Walkabout is DME for children who have impaired ambulation and who lack trunk stability and balance. The Mulholland Walkabout is a walker with four wheels and attached back brace.

Note: Curative does not cover standard strollers because they do not meet Curatives contractual definition of covered DME in that they are not primarily medical in nature, and they are normally of use in the absence of illness or injury.

Specially adapted strollers could be considered medically necessary DME when they are used in place of a wheelchair for children.

Prone, Supine and Upright Standers for Children with Special Needs

These floor/mobile standers for children (e.g., Rifton Supine, Prone or Dynamic; Squiggles) as DME for children with cerebral palsy or other severe neuromuscular conditions.

Heavy-Duty Walker

A heavy-duty walker is DME for members who meet medical necessity criteria for a standard walker and who weigh more than three hundred pounds. A heavy-duty walker is one that is labeled as capable of supporting members who weigh more than 300 pounds. It may be fixed height or adjustable height. It may be rigid or folding.

A heavy-duty walker may include wheels and glide-type brakes. A wheeled walker is one with 2, 3, or 4 wheels. The wheels may be fixed or swivel. It may be fixed height or adjustable height. It may or may not include glide-type brakes (or equivalent). A glide-type brake consists of a spring mechanism (or equivalent), which raises the leg post of the walker off the ground when the member is not pushing down on the frame.

Heavy-Duty, Multiple Braking System, Variable Wheel Resistance Walker

A heavy-duty, multiple braking system, variable wheel resistance walker as DME for members who meet medical necessity criteria for a standard walker and who are unable to use a standard walker due to a severe neurological disorder or other condition causing the restricted use of one hand. Obesity, by itself, would not be considered a medically necessary indication for this walker.

Note: For purposes of this policy, a “heavy-duty, multiple braking system, and variable wheel resistance walker” is a 4-wheeled, adjustable height, folding-walker that has *all* of the following characteristics:

- At least two wheels have brakes that can be independently set through tension adjustability to give varying resistance, *and*
- Capable of supporting individuals who weigh greater than 350 pounds, *and*
- Hand operated brakes that cause the wheels to lock when the hand levers are released, *and*
- The hand brakes can be set so that either or both can lock the wheels, *and*
- The pressure required to operate each hand brake is individually adjustable, *and*
- There is an additional braking mechanism on the front crossbar.

Walker with Enclosed Frame

Consistent with Medicare policy, Curative does not cover walkers with enclosed frames because their medical necessity compared to a standard folding wheeled walker has not been established. A walker with enclosed frame is a folding wheeled walker that has a frame that completely surrounds the member and an attached seat in the back.

Walker with Trunk Support

A walker with trunk support for members who meet medical necessity criteria for a standard walker and who have documentation in the medical record justifying the medical necessity for the special features.

Kneeling Walker/Knee Walker/Rolling Knee Walker/ Kneeling Crutch

A kneeling walker/knee walker/rolling knee walker (e.g., Roll-A-Bout Walker, Rolleraid, Turning Leg Caddy) or a kneeling crutch (e.g., iWALKFree]) as DME for below-the-knee injuries/conditions if the member meets criteria for a standard walker, crutch or cane, but is unable to use one of those devices due to other impairments (e.g., member only has one functional arm, etc.).

Enhancement Accessories

Curative does not cover enhancement accessories of walkers, canes, and crutches as these are considered convenient items. An enhancement accessory is one that does not contribute significantly to the therapeutic function of the walker, cane, or crutch. It may include, but not limited to style, color, hand operated brakes (other than those described in the section above on heavy duty, multiple braking system, variable wheel resistance walker), seat attachments, tray attachments, baskets, or cup holders (or equivalent).

Leg Extensions

Leg extensions as DME for members six feet tall or more.

Arm Rests

Arm rest attachments as DME when the member's ability to grip is impaired.

Walking Belts

Note: Curative does not cover walking belts (belts used to support and guide the member in walking) because they do not meet Curative contractual definition of DME in that they are not primarily medical in nature, and they are normally of use to persons who do not have a disease or injury.

Gait Trainers: The Rifton Gait Trainer/Pacer Gait Trainer, The KidWalk Gait Mobility System, and the Therapeutic Ambulatory Orthotic System (TAOS)

A gait trainer (or sometimes referred to as a rollator) is a term used to describe certain devices that are used to support a member during ambulation.

- o The Rifton Gait Trainer/Pacer Gait Trainer as DME for children and adults with cerebral palsy or other neuromuscular disorders who require moderate to maximum support for walking and who are capable of walking with this device.
- o The Rifton Gait Trainer is a type of walker, which provides considerable postural support for the user. It comes in a range of sizes that caters for tiny children through to adults. Each size has a range of adjustable features that can be adjusted to meet individual needs. This walker has been superseded by the Pacer Gait Trainer, which is a redesign of the Rifton Gait Trainer. It is suitable for children and adults who require moderate to maximum support for walking. The frame is made of aluminum. The large casters offer a range of functions -- gradual brake/drag, brake lock, swivel, swivel lock and 1-way ratchet control. This gives a wide range of control in speed, direction, and maneuverability. Three sizes are available -- user elbow heights from 44.5 to 119.5 cm.
- o The KidWalk Gait Mobility System and the Therapeutic Ambulatory Orthotic System (TAOS) as DME for children with cerebral palsy or other neuromuscular disorders who require moderate to maximum support for walking and are capable of walking with these devices.
- o The TAOS is an orthotic and a walker base. According to the manufacturer, these two components work together to provide a child with cerebral palsy an upright hands-free

environment. The manufacturer states that the orthotic guides the child into proper alignment so they can train the proper muscles. The base holds the child in a standing position and provides security for them to explore and improve.

Experimental and Investigational

The following interventions are considered experimental and investigational because the effectiveness of these approaches has not been established:

- o The Upsee mobility device for children with cerebral palsy, and neurodevelopmental disability (e.g., Cri-du-chat syndrome and Pitt Hopkins syndrome) because its clinical value for these indications has not been established. The Upsee mobility device is not covered DME because it does not meet the contractual definition of durability. Please check the benefit plan descriptions.
- o The use of a wearable freezing of gait detection system for assisting walking of individuals with Parkinson's disease because of insufficient evidence in the peer-reviewed literature.
- o The Autoambulator because the clinical evidence is not sufficient to permit conclusions on the health outcome effects of the Autoambulator.

6. PROCEDURE

N/A

7. TRAINING REQUIREMENT

7.1. All Medical UM associates are responsible for reading and comprehending this procedure. Employees are also responsible for contacting management or Privacy and Compliance with any questions or concerns regarding the information contained within this procedure.

8. ENFORCEMENT

Violations of this controlled document will cause the imposition of sanctions in accordance with the Curative sanctions-controlled document. This may include verbal/written warning, suspension, up to termination of employment or volunteer, intern, contractor status with Curative. Additional civil, criminal, and equitable remedies may apply.

9. DOCUMENTATION

N/A

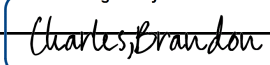
10. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND MATERIALS

10.1. Regulatory Authority - N/A

11. COLLABORATING DEPARTMENTS

N/A

12. DOCUMENT CONTROL

APPROVED BY:		
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REVISION HISTORY			
Date	Author	Version	Comments
			Initial Version

APPENDICES

Any applicable attachments, resources or other materials should be included as appendices in this section. Label each appendix as follows:

Appendix A:

N/A