

The Department of Vermont Health Access Clinical Criteria

Subject: Adaptive Positioning Seats, including Car Supports

Last Review: December 21, 2021*

Past Revisions: February 18, 2020, March 13, 2018, January 3, 2017, September 28, 2015, October 30, 2014, May 28, 2013, June 4, 2012, January 26, 2011, June 15, 2009, 2004, and **Technical Revision:** September 8, 2009

***Please note: Most current content changes will be highlighted in yellow.**

Description of Service or Procedure

- **Adaptive positioning seats** are seating devices other than wheelchairs, commodes/toileting devices, and bathing devices, specifically designed for beneficiaries with specialized medical needs. The devices are for beneficiaries who cannot use conventional seats in order to participate in basic activities of daily living (feeding, grooming, hygiene, and dressing) because of a medical condition. The **adaptive** positioning seat provides proper postural control, proper alignment, and proper support to optimize functional abilities and safety.

Adaptive car supports are safety and positioning devices specifically used for beneficiaries with specialized medical needs when conventional car seats **or seat belts** do not meet the medical need.

Disclaimer

Coverage is limited to that outlined in Medicaid Rule or Health Care Administrative Rules that pertains to the beneficiary's aid category. Prior Authorization (PA) is only valid if the beneficiary is eligible for the applicable item or service on the date of service.

Medicaid Rule

Medicaid and Health Care Administrative Rules can be found at <https://humanservices.vermont.gov/rules-policies/health-care-rules/health-care-administrative-rules-hcar/adopted-rules>

- 7102.2 Prior Authorization Determination
- 4.101 Medical Necessity for Covered Services
- 4.104 Medicaid Non-Covered Services



Coverage Position

Adaptive positioning seat and/or car **support** may be covered for beneficiaries:

- When the device is prescribed by a licensed medical provider, enrolled in the Vermont Medicaid program, operating within their scope of practice as described on the Vermont's Office of Professional Regulation's website*, **Statute, or Rule** who is knowledgeable regarding **adaptive** equipment, and who provides medical care to the beneficiary AND
- When the clinical criteria below are met.

* Vermont's Office of Professional Regulation's website: <https://sos.vermont.gov/opr/>

Coverage Criteria

An adaptive positioning seat may be covered for beneficiaries who:

- Are not able to sit safely in a conventional chair, booster seat, or high chair, AND
- Require specialized positioning in order to safely perform basic activities of daily living, AND
- Have successfully trialed the device AND
- Exhibit one or more of the following medical condition(s):
 - Significant head and trunk instability and/or weakness,
 - Significant hypotonicity, hypertonicity, athetosis, ataxia, spasticity, or muscle spasming which results in uncontrollable movement and position change,
 - Absence or latency of protective reactions,
 - Inability to maintain an unsupported sitting position independently, or
 - Other significant positional needs that cannot be met in the conventional seats listed above.

An adaptive car support may be covered for beneficiaries who:

- Are not able to safely use a conventional car seat OR exhibit behavioral manifestations of a documented medical condition that put the driver or beneficiary at risk of injury, AND
- Are not able to be properly supported and safe in the vehicle during normal transport, including turns, accelerations, decelerations, or riding over rough terrain without the requested device AND
- Have successfully trialed the device AND
- Exhibit one or more of the following medical condition(s):
 - Significant head and trunk instability and/or weakness,
 - Significant hypotonicity, hypertonicity, athetosis, ataxia, spasticity, **tremors**, or muscle spasming which results in uncontrollable movement and position change,
 - Absence or latency of protective reactions,
 - Inability to maintain an unsupported sitting position independently,
 - Severe seizure activity that results in uncontrollable movement and position change (such as tonic-clonic seizures),
 - Orthopedic disease processes resulting in significant bony fragility (for example: osteogenesis imperfecta) or significant contracture that would result in a beneficiary's inability to perform postural corrections due to vehicle motion (for example: arthrogyrosis),
 - Behaviors that put the beneficiary or driver at risk of injury.

Other information regarding special needs positioning seats:

Adaptive positioning seats with a seat- to- floor feature may be covered when the beneficiary requires access to the floor for self-transfers and to access their means of mobility (for example, a beneficiary who

mobilizes through creeping or rolling and is able to self-transfer into the chair independently or with less than maximal assistance).

Adaptive positioning seats with a high-seat-to-low-seat feature may be covered when the beneficiary requires access to both higher and lower surfaces to accomplish their basic activities of daily living (for example, accessing the table for eating and the sink for tooth brushing).

Adaptive positioning seat: Proper evaluation must address issues including:

- Airway integrity,
- Skin integrity,
- Circulatory integrity,
- Allowance of voluntary movement where it does not negatively impact safety,
- Proper positioning,
- Type of release mechanism, to ensure safety for beneficiaries with behavioral and/or judgment issues,
- The ability of the device to support the beneficiary properly despite seizure activity, athetosis, ataxia, or muscle spasms,
- **Transfers in and out of the device,**
- The ability of the device to support a growing child over time including growth in height and weight, and
- Parent/caregiver education: Parents/caregivers must always be advised that devices with straps, belts, or harnesses can result in danger of strangulation. Beneficiaries should never be left alone with devices that have straps, belts or harnesses. Positioning seats can never be used as restraints.

Other Information regarding adaptive car supports:

Car supports include:

- **Car seats**
- **Car beds** (for example, a child with Pierre Robin Sequence may need to be positioned in prone during car rides to maintain an open airway).
- **Harness systems** (for example, a child with autism may have impulse control issues and the harness will prevent injury to the driver or escape while the vehicle is in motion.)

Many beneficiaries with special **medical** needs can be safely supported in standard car seats or booster seats, which are not covered by Vermont Medicaid. The need for a specialized **adaptive car support** must be demonstrated by a physician's certificate of medical necessity, and a physical or occupational therapy evaluation with supporting documentation.

Adaptive car support evaluation must address issues including:

- Airway integrity,
- Skin integrity,
- Circulatory integrity,
- Allowance of voluntary movement where it does not negatively impact safety,
- Proper positioning,
- Type of release mechanism, to ensure the safety of beneficiaries with behavioral and/or judgment issues,
- The ability of the device to support the beneficiary properly despite seizure activity, athetosis, ataxia, or muscle spasms,

- **Transfers in and out of the device,**

- The ability of the device to support a growing child over time including growth in height and weight, and
- Parent/caregiver education: Parents/caregivers must always be advised that the rear seat is the safest location for children. Seat belts should always lie across the hips rather than the abdomen, and shoulder straps should always lie across the chest, not the neck or throat. Parents/caregivers must also be advised that properly used car seats are safer than transporting beneficiaries in a wheelchair within the vehicle, even with special transit brackets affixed to the wheelchair.

Beneficiaries with a tracheostomy should not be seated in car seats that have a tray or shield harness system. The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that these systems can block the airway of a child with a tracheostomy during a crash.

The prescribing medical practitioner and the DME provider must educate the family on proper positioning and proper usage of the **adaptive car support** per the manufacturer's specifications. Medical professionals are expected to periodically assess the family's needs for safe transportation of the beneficiary.

Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT): Vermont Medicaid will provide comprehensive services and furnish all Medicaid coverable, appropriate, and medically necessary services needed to correct and ameliorate health conditions for Medicaid members under age 21.

Clinical criteria for repeat service or procedure

- When the device has been outgrown, OR
- When the device no longer meets the medical needs of the beneficiary, OR
- When the device is no longer functional through normal wear (expected to last at least 5 years), OR
- For **adaptive car supports**: When the device has been in a motor vehicle accident that may have compromised its ability to protect the beneficiary.

Type of service or procedure covered

- **Adaptive** positioning seats and positioning components.
- **Adaptive car supports**, including forward or backward facing seats, horizontal car beds, and vest harnesses, for beneficiaries with specialized **medical** needs. Also covered are specialized **positioning** components for the car **support**.
- The car **supports** acceptable for DVHA coverage must meet Federal Safety standards, must be able to accommodate safety adaptations, and must be able to accommodate a pediatric beneficiary's growth.
- Specific coding for a special needs car **support** is required if applicable.

Type of service or procedure not covered (this list may not be all inclusive)

- Positioning seats cannot be covered for the purpose of restraint.
- Positioning seats will not be covered if the beneficiary's wheelchair/mobility device can meet the medical need.
- Positioning and car **supports** for individuals without specialized **medical** needs as described above.
- Conventional seats and car seats.

- Vehicle modifications to accommodate car seats.
- Multiple positioning and car seats for one beneficiary.

Coding guidelines

Note that the specific HCPCS code for positioning seats is only applicable for beneficiaries with special orthopedic needs. For all other beneficiaries, there is currently no other code more specific than the miscellaneous durable medical equipment HCPCS code.

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