

Title: Acupuncture for Chronic Low Back Pain (CAG-00452N)

Decision: The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will expand Medicare coverage to cover acupuncture for patients with chronic low back pain. Up to 12 visits in 90 days are covered under the following circumstances:

- For the purpose of this decision, chronic low back pain (cLBP) is defined as:
 - Lasting 12 weeks or longer;
 - nonspecific, in that it has no identifiable systemic cause (i.e., not associated with metastatic, inflammatory, infectious, etc. disease);
 - not associated with surgery; and
 - not associated with pregnancy.
- An additional eight sessions will be covered for those patients demonstrating an improvement. No more than 20 acupuncture treatments may be administered annually.
- Treatment must be discontinued if the patient is not improving or is regressing.
- Acupuncture services must be provided by a medical professional eligible to furnish acupuncture under the Medicare program.

All types of acupuncture for any condition other than cLBP continue to be non-covered by Medicare.

What this means: Acupuncture for chronic low back pain may be covered up to 20 visits per year, for a member whose condition meets the Medicare criteria for coverage, as long as the member's pain improves with acupuncture. Services must be provided by a medical professional eligible to furnish acupuncture under the Medicare program. Please refer to the final decision memo for all coverage criteria.

Effective: January 21, 2020

This announcement can be found at: [Decision Memo for Acupuncture for Chronic Low Back Pain \(CAG-00452N\)](#)

HealthPartners is a health plan that contracts with both Medicare and the Minnesota Medical Assistance (Medicaid) program to provide benefits of both programs to enrollees. HealthPartners is also a Cost plan and PPO plan with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in HealthPartners depends on contract renewal. HealthPartners UnityPoint Health is a PPO plan with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in HealthPartners UnityPoint Health depends on contract renewal.

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H3416_90242 IR Approved 06/2017
H2422_90242 IR Approved 07/2015
H4882_90242 IR Approved 03/2018