

## Lodging and Meal Reimbursement

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**Member-specific benefits take precedence over medical policy and benefits may vary across plans. Refer to the individual's benefit plan for details\*.**

### Purpose:

This policy addresses Lodging and Meal Reimbursement.

### Description & Definitions:

Sentara Health Plan Virginia Medicaid (previously Optima Family Care and Optima Health Community Care) offers reimbursement of meals and lodging in some situations as part of their core benefits.

Meal Reimbursement for Sentara Health Plan Virginia Medicaid (previously Optima Family Care and Optima Health Community Care):

Meals for the member in addition to one family member who is acting as the attendant will be reimbursed at up to \$50.00 per person per day. The member is responsible for the initial payment of meals. Once the member provides meal receipts to the Plan, the receipts will be processed and the member reimbursed.

Sentara Health Plan Virginia Medicaid (previously Optima Family Care and Optima Health Community Care) members may only utilize lodging services for outpatient care when a provider is not available. In accordance with member travel time and distance standards set forth in the Virginia DMAS MCO contracts or during a continuity of care period.

### Criteria:

Lodging and meal reimbursement is considered medically necessary and thus a covered benefit with **1 or more** of the following:

- Individual is under the age of 21 years old. All children under the age of 21 require an attendant/parent when travelling out of the service area for medical care. In addition to the pediatric member, eligible expenses for ONE attendant will be covered.
- Individual is 21 years old or greater with a medical statement from provider supporting medical necessity. One attendant will be covered with **1 or more of the following**:

- The individual is severely disabled with a physical or mental impairment, and unable to travel alone
- The individual is too ill to make their own decisions or make their wishes known
- The individual is facing end of life issues and requires family to assist in decisions

Lodging and meal reimbursement is considered **not medically necessary** for uses other than those listed in the clinical criteria, to include but not limited to:

- Supplements, snacks, and meals in addition to breakfast, lunch, or dinner are not considered medically necessary and are not considered medical expenses.
- Amounts paid for a trip or vacation taken for a change in environment, improvement of morale, or general improvement of health, even if recommended by a doctor, are not eligible medical expenses.
- Early relocation to other geographical region while awaiting transplantation without supporting medical necessity documentation is not covered.
- Relocation expenses to be near a treatment facility are not covered (rent, cable, internet, transportation not related to medical services)

All meal and travel expenses that do not meet the guidelines in the Clinical Indications for Procedure section are considered not eligible medical expenses.

### Coding:

#### Medically necessary with criteria:

Coding	Description
	None – this is a member reimbursement from receipts submitted

#### Considered Not Medically Necessary:

Coding	Description
	None

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) - approved only products only.

### Document History:

Revised Dates:

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- 2024: April
- 2023: May
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- 2021: June
- 2020: July
- 2019: August
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- 2017: December

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- January 2016

### References:

Specialty Association Guidelines; Government Regulations; Winifred S. Hayes, Inc; UpToDate; Literature Review; Specialty Advisors; National Coverage Determination (NCD); Local Coverage Determination (LCD).

(2023). Retrieved Apr 18, 2023, from MCG 26th Edition: <https://careweb.careguidelines.com/ed26/index.html>

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#### Special Notes: \*

This medical policy expresses Sentara Health Plan's determination of medical necessity of services, and they are based upon a review of currently available clinical information. Medical policies are not a substitute for clinical judgment or for any prior authorization requirements of the health plan. These policies are not an explanation of benefits.

Medical policies can be highly technical and complex and are provided here for informational purposes. These medical policies are intended for use by health care professionals. The medical policies do not constitute medical advice or medical care. Treating health care professionals are solely responsible for diagnosis, treatment and medical advice. Sentara Health Plan members should discuss the information in the medical policies with their treating health care professionals. Medical technology is constantly evolving and these medical policies are subject to change without notice, although Sentara Health Plan will notify providers as required in advance of changes that could have a negative impact on benefits.

#### Keywords:

Optima Family Care, OFC, lodging, meals, reimbursement, medical 169, SHP Lodging and Meal Reimbursement, SHP Medical 169