

# Special Bulletin

April 2006

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## Authorization Procedure for Requests for Psychological and Neuropsychological Testing

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued several new psychological and neuropsychological testing codes, effective Jan. 1, 2006. A complete description of the psychological testing codes (96101, 96102, 96103) and the neuropsychological testing codes (96118, 96119, 96120) can be found at the end of this Special Bulletin.

Highmark has adopted the six (6) procedure codes listed above for use by network psychologists, effective for dates of service beginning Jan. 1, 2006.

Highmark HMS will evaluate requests for authorization of psychological and neuropsychological testing for members who have the DirectBlue<sup>®</sup>, SelectBlue<sup>®</sup> or FreedomBlue<sup>SM</sup> plans to ensure that requests are medically necessary and within industry standards. Providers are advised to check the member's benefits to see if an authorization is needed and are reminded that members must have the necessary benefit coverage to be eligible for psychological and neuropsychological testing. You can do so via NaviNet<sup>SM</sup> or by calling the Member Services telephone number on the back of the member's ID card.

Please note, testing for the following services will not be certified as being medically necessary:

- Vocational counseling (employment-related)
- Educational (school assessments/special education placement planning)
- IQ testing (for the sole purpose of obtaining an IQ score)

### How the Authorization Process Works

Requests will be reviewed by a licensed clinical psychologist or management-designated personnel to assess appropriateness of tests requested for given diagnoses and to ascertain if requested testing times are in accordance with recognized durations for administration and scoring of each test submitted.

Number of hours authorized is based on administration information supplied by test manufacturers where available and is not based on how long it may take a psychologist to complete the testing. Durations authorized will include the time for administration, scoring, and report writing of tests requested.

### Authorization Request Procedure

The procedure for authorization requests for psychological or neuropsychological testing is as follows:

- Requests for authorizations may be submitted via NaviNet or a Request for Pre-certification of Psychological Testing form can be faxed to the Behavioral Health Unit at 1-800-667-9304. If relevant information is missing, the reviewer will contact the provider (electronically via NaviNet or by telephone) requesting the necessary clinical data. Request forms can be found on the Provider Resource Center on NaviNet and at [www.highmarkblueshield.com](http://www.highmarkblueshield.com). All forms are downloadable and can be printed.

*Over, please*

- Completed request forms will be reviewed for medical necessity and for duration of testing time that can be authorized. Approvals for neuropsychological testing (CPT code 96118, 96119, 96120) will be authorized and processed under the medical benefit according to the medical diagnosis given. Approvals for psychological testing (CPT code 96101, 96102, 96103) will be authorized and processed under the behavioral health benefit, according to the behavioral health diagnosis given. The maximum authorized hours **will include** hours and/or units associated with all of the recently approved additional testing codes: 96101, 96102, 96103, 96118, 96119, and 96120.\*
- Providers should note that only one (1) unit of 96103 or 96120 may be requested.
- All decisions will be documented and communicated to members and providers. The member and the provider will each receive a copy of the approval or denial letter.
- If the testing is not a covered benefit, members and providers will receive a benefit denial letter.

*\* Exceptions to the hours authorized will be considered when requested based on relevant case-specific clinical factors. If the reviewer is unable to approve the request as submitted, the reviewer will contact the requesting psychologist to explore any relevant case-specific clinical factors per above. If the request is denied, the reviewer will generate the denial letter which details the appeal process for the requesting psychologist.*

#### Definitions of New Codes

- 96101 Psychological testing (includes psychodiagnostic assessment of emotionality, intellectual abilities, personality and psychopathology, e.g., MMPI, Rorschach, WAIS, etc.), per hour of the psychologist's or physician's time, both face-to-face time with the patient and time interpreting test results and preparing the report.
- 96102 Psychological testing (includes psychodiagnostic assessment of emotionality, intellectual abilities, personality and psychopathology, e.g., MMPI and WAIS, etc.), with qualified health care professional interpretation and report, administered by technician, per hour of technician time, face-to-face.
- 96103 Psychological testing (includes psychodiagnostic assessment of emotionality, intellectual abilities, personality and psychopathology, e.g., MMPI, etc.), administered by a computer, with qualified health care professional interpretation and report.
- 96118 Neuropsychological testing (e.g., Halstead-Reitan Neuropsychological Battery, Wechsler Memory Scales, Wisconsin Card Sorting Test, etc.), per hour of the psychologist's or physician's time, both face-to-face time with the patient and time interpreting test results and preparing the report.
- 96119 Neuropsychological testing (e.g., Halstead-Reitan Neuropsychological Battery, Wechsler Memory Scales, Wisconsin Card Sorting Test, etc.), with qualified health care professional interpretation and report, administered by technician, per hour of technician time, face-to-face.
- 96120 Neuropsychological testing (e.g., Wisconsin Card Sorting Test, etc.), administered by a computer, with qualified health care professional interpretation and report.

If you have specific questions about the authorization procedure for requests for psychological or neuropsychological testing, please contact your Provider Relations representative.

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