



Sleep Therapy Management Program Frequently Asked Questions

Effective March 1, 2013, Empire BlueCross BlueShield ("Empire") requires prior authorization of the following non-emergency, outpatient and/or facility-based and home-based sleep testing and therapy services:

- Home sleep test (HST)
- In-lab sleep study (PSG)
- Titration study
- Initial treatment order (APAP, CPAP, BPAP, and oral devices, appliances and related supplies)
- Ongoing treatment order (APAP, CPAP, BPAP, and oral devices, appliances and related supplies)

Prior authorization requests are handled by AIM Specialty HealthSM (AIM), an affiliate of Empire.

1. What is the sleep management program?

The sleep management program requires prior authorization of non-emergency, non-inpatient sleep testing and therapy services. This program considers the medical necessity of the sleep study as well as the clinical appropriateness of a facility test or a test done in the home. Prior authorization is also required for coverage of any subsequent treatment (therapy), both initial and ongoing. For therapy services, members must meet usage criteria for the continued coverage of rental of equipment and replacement of supplies. Servicing providers' claims and durable medical equipment (DME) providers' claims for equipment and supplies adjudicate based on the benefit approval or denial outcome.

Services performed in conjunction with emergency room services, inpatient hospitalization, or urgent-care facilities are excluded.

2. How does the sleep management program work?

Providers must submit a prior authorization request and specified clinical information for home and facility-based sleep testing services scheduled to begin on or after March 1, 2013, which will result in the approval or denial of coverage for the requested test. When a sleep test is medically necessary, if the provider wants to prior authorize a facility-based test but it does not meet medical necessity criteria for the facility setting, the provider will have the opportunity to order a home study.

Providers should contact AIM to obtain an order number for the following elective services or supplies scheduled for March 1, 2013 or later: home-based (unattended) diagnostic sleep study or a facility-based (not inpatient) diagnostic or titration study (free-standing or hospital), as well as for sleep treatment (therapy) equipment and related supplies.

Provider requests for sleep testing or therapy services may be submitted through AIM's **ProviderPortal**SM, or by calling the AIM call center:

- Online prior authorization is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, through AIM's **ProviderPortal**. It is fully interactive, processing prior authorizations in real-time using proprietary clinical criteria. The **ProviderPortal** may be accessed directly at aimspecialtyhealth.com/gowebssleep.
- Requests can also be submitted to AIM via telephone. Providers can call AIM toll-free at **877-430-2288**, Monday – Friday, 8:00a.m. – 6:00 p.m. ET.

Note: Servicing providers are strongly encouraged to verify that an order number has been obtained before initiating, scheduling and performing services.

3. Are there Empire members who are not included in the sleep program?

Prior authorization for sleep testing and treatment is not required for the following members:

- Federal Employee Program (FEP)
- Empire secondary coverage, including those whose primary insurance carrier is Medicare
- Medicare Advantage – MediBlue (prior to 1/1/2014)
- Child Health Plus (CHP)
- Groups that do not participate in high-tech radiology programs, and groups with medical management handled outside of Empire

4. Who can submit requests for sleep testing and therapy services?

Both ordering physicians (those referring the member for sleep testing and therapy) and servicing providers may submit requests for sleep testing and therapy on behalf of Empire members. Durable medical equipment (DME) suppliers may submit requests for sleep therapy services.

5. What information will AIM require in order to evaluate a request?

AIM offers a checklist of required information for each sleep service. This can be found online at aimspecialtyhealth.com/gowebssleep. Click on "Sleep Management Clinical Questions." There are additional Frequently Asked Questions and Answers to be found on the site as well.

6. What does the AIM order number look like?

AIM's order numbers for the sleep program have six numerical digits.

7. How long is an order number valid?

From the date issued, AIM order numbers are valid for:

- 60 days for diagnostic tests
- 90 days for initial treatment orders and for ongoing treatment orders within the PAP equipment rent-to-own timeframe
- 365 days for ongoing treatment requests that are outside of the rent-to-own timeframe
- 365 days for oral devices/appliances

Note: AIM will not accept retrospective requests submitted more than two business days after the date of service.

8. If AIM issues an adverse determination, is there an option to appeal the decision?

Yes, providers may appeal directly to Empire. Empire retains the responsibility for grievances and appeals.

9. If the review is done via the telephone, is a letter sent to the provider whether the service was approved or denied?

Yes, letters are sent to the ordering provider, servicing provider and member.

10. Are there any compliance requirements for ongoing treatment orders?

Yes, servicing providers are required to meet the compliance standards provided in AIM's clinical guidelines to continue to receive payment on PAP devices and supply orders for ongoing treatment services.

11. How do ordering physicians receive the capability information for available sleep facilities?

The testing and treatment capabilities for sleep facilities collected through the web-based *OptiNet*[®] Provider Assessment are available to ordering physicians during the Provider Selection phase of case review.

Ordering physicians may choose a servicing provider based on the servicing providers' availability to provide home sleep testing, facility sleep testing and DME services. Those providers who indicate they are accredited in their assessment are reported as such in the online display. All facilities need to complete their assessment to have their site included in the online information listing.

12. How does AIM derive capability information for available sleep facilities?

AIM has requested information from all Empire contracted providers who perform sleep testing and therapy via the **OptiNet** assessment. Empire has requested that all providers of sleep testing and therapy services submit a completed survey online. The survey collects data on services, staffing and accreditation.

13. I am a servicing provider for sleep testing services. May I review my capability information before it is made available to ordering physicians and members?

Yes, if you are a provider who performs sleep testing and therapy, the **OptiNet** assessment is available at aimspecialtyhealth.com/gowebssleep. Simply select Empire from the drop-down menu. Only those providers who have completed the **OptiNet** assessment are able to view their information online. Facilities need to complete their assessment to have their site included in the online information listing.