

13 - New Medical Technology

To keep pace with developments in new medical technology and to ensure that members receive safe and effective care, Sierra Health & Life (SHL) follows UnitedHealthcare's (UHC) process. UHC's Medical Technology Assessment Committee (MTAC) is responsible for developing and approving all new medical policies. Medical policies are developed to assist Medical Directors and others to accurately review service requests within the context of the contract language in a plan document. New policies are developed in response to emerging technology or new treatments and are based on scientific evidence, where such evidence exists.

Pharmacy clinical programs and criteria are developed by UHC clinical pharmacists. Selection of drug products and development of program criteria include review of peer-reviewed medical literature, including randomized clinical trials, drug comparison studies, pharmacoeconomic studies, outcomes research data; published clinical practice guidelines, comparisons of efficacy, side effects, potential for off label use, and thorough UHC claims data analysis. Program review also includes a comprehensive efficacy comparison as well as the type and frequency of side effects and potential drug interactions among alternative drug products, and will consider the likely impact of a drug product on patient compliance when compared to alternative products, and evaluation of the benefits, risks, and potential outcomes for participants. All criteria are reviewed by the UHC Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) Committee before implementation.

The MTAC's mission is to review the scientifically based clinical evidence used in the development of UHC's medical policies and clinical programs in an effort to ensure transparency and consistency and to identify safe and effective health services for UHC members.

The MTAC is comprised of Medical Policy Development and Implementation Staff Members, Non-Voting Members, and Voting Members. Voting Members are UnitedHealth Group Medical Directors with diverse medical and surgical specialties and subspecialties from health plans, business segments, acquired entities, and clinical review units. Non-Voting members include Legal Services, Consumer Affairs, Medical Policy Development and Operations Team, Benefit Interpretation Team, Guest physician specialists (as required), etc.

Providers who would like to send recommendations to update a medical policy can direct their request and peer-reviewed literature to mpq@uhc.com.