

Cesarean Delivery Policy, Professional

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT THIS REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

You are responsible for submission of accurate claims. This reimbursement policy is intended to ensure that you are reimbursed based on the code or codes that correctly describe the health care services provided. UnitedHealthcare Community Plan reimbursement policies uses Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) or other coding guidelines. References to CPT or other sources are for definitional purposes only and do not imply any right to reimbursement.

This reimbursement policy applies to all health care services billed on CMS 1500 forms and, when specified, to those billed on UB04 forms. Coding methodology, industry-standard reimbursement logic, regulatory requirements, benefits design and other factors are considered in developing reimbursement policy.

This information is intended to serve only as a general reference resource regarding UnitedHealthcare Community Plan's reimbursement policy for the services described and is not intended to address every aspect of a reimbursement situation. Accordingly, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan may use reasonable discretion in interpreting and applying this policy to health care services provided in a particular case. Further, the policy does not address all issues related to reimbursement for health care services provided to UnitedHealthcare Community Plan enrollees.

Other factors affecting reimbursement may supplement, modify or, in some cases, supersede this policy. These factors include, but are not limited to: federal &/or state regulatory requirements, the physician or other provider contracts, the enrollee's benefit coverage documents, and/or other reimbursement, medical or drug policies.

Finally, this policy may not be implemented exactly the same way on the different electronic claims processing systems used by UnitedHealthcare Community Plan due to programming or other constraints; however, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan strives to minimize these variations.

UnitedHealthcare Community Plan may modify this reimbursement policy at any time by publishing a new version of the policy on this Website. However, the information presented in this policy is accurate and current as of the date of publication.

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Application

This reimbursement policy applies to UnitedHealthcare Community Plan Medicaid products.

This reimbursement policy applies to services reported using the 1500 Health Insurance Claim Form (a/k/a CMS-1500) or its electronic equivalent or its successor form. This policy applies to all products and all network and non-network physicians and other qualified health care professionals, including, but not limited to, non-network authorized and percent of charge contract physicians and other qualified health care professionals.

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Policy

Overview

This policy describes reimbursement for elective, non-medically indicated cesarean deliveries. For this policy, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan will use the ICD-10 diagnosis codes list defined by the Joint Commission National Quality Measures that supports cesarean deliveries along with additional diagnosis codes identified by UnitedHealthcare Community Plan medical directors.

Reimbursement Guidelines

Per the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) Committee, “Given the balance of risks and benefits, the Committee on Obstetric Practice believes that in the absence of maternal or fetal indications for cesarean delivery, a plan for vaginal delivery is safe and appropriate and should be recommended to patients.”

Cesarean Obstetrical Care

A cesarean birth is the delivery of the baby through incisions in the mother’s abdomen and uterus.

The American Medical Association (AMA), Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) book defines cesarean delivery codes as:

59510	59514	59515	59618	59620	59622
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UnitedHealthcare Community Plan reimburses these cesarean delivery codes when submitted with an appropriate ICD-10 diagnosis code, from the defined list, in any position. Cesarean deliveries that are performed electively and do not include a high-risk diagnosis will not be denied but will not be reimbursed at the allowable amount. The ICD-10 diagnosis code list, within this policy, was defined by the Joint Commission National Quality Measures along with the addition of diagnosis codes determined by UnitedHealthcare Community Plan to support a cesarean delivery.

Obstetrical Care Services

Global obstetrical care, antepartum care only, delivery only and/or postpartum care only are reimbursable services.

Assistant Surgeon and Cesarean Sections

Only a non-global cesarean section delivery code (CPT codes 59514 or 59620) is a reimbursable service when submitted with an appropriate assistant surgeon modifier.

State Exceptions

Colorado	Colorado is exempt from this policy.
Idaho	Idaho is exempt from this policy.
Indiana	Indiana uses their own defined diagnosis list for Cesarean Deliveries.
Mississippi	Mississippi uses their own defined diagnosis list for Cesarean Deliveries.
New Mexico	U1 modifier must be used for 59510, 59514, 59515 when cesarean is considered medically necessary.
New York	Modifier U7, U8 or U9 is required on delivery codes.
Rhode Island	Rhode Island is exempt from this policy.
Texas	Modifier U1, U2 or U3 is required on delivery codes. Modifier U3 is not reimbursable.

Definitions

Elective Cesarean Delivery	A primary cesarean delivery in the absence of any maternal or fetal indications.
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Questions and Answers

1	<p>Q: If one physician performs the cesarean delivery only, and a physician in another practice (different federal tax identification number) provides the antepartum and postpartum care, how should these services be reported?</p> <p>A: The physician who performs the cesarean delivery only should report the delivery service, without a postpartum component, e.g., CPT code 59514 with a medically indicated diagnosis code supporting reason for cesarean delivery. The other physician should report the antepartum care only code supporting the number of visits rendered (CPT code 59425 or 59426) and postpartum care only code (CPT code 59430).</p>
2	<p>Q: If a physician performs the total global obstetrical care that resulted in a cesarean delivery (CPT code 59510) that is planned because of a risk to the mother or fetus, will the global services be reduced if the supporting diagnosis for the delivery is within the list of the high-risk diagnosis codes?</p> <p>A: No, reimbursement of the global obstetrical care services will not be reduced if billed with a high-risk diagnosis code.</p>
3	<p>Q: If a physician requires the assistance of a physician assistant for a non-global cesarean delivery will the physician assistant's services be reduced if not supported by a high-risk diagnosis code?</p> <p>A: Yes, the reimbursement for the Assistant at Surgery services will have the same requirements to support the cesarean services as the physicians. If not supported by a high-risk diagnosis code, in any position, the procedure will be reimbursed at a reduction of the allowable amount.</p>

Codes

59510	59514	59515	59618	59620	59622
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Modifiers

U1	U2 (Texas)	U3 (Texas)	U7 (New York)	U8 (New York)	U9 (New York)
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Attachments

ICD-10 OB C-Section Diagnosis List	A list of ICD-10-CM diagnosis codes that support Cesarean deliveries.
Indiana ICD-10 OB C-Section Diagnosis List	A list of ICD-10-CM diagnosis codes that support Cesarean deliveries defined by Indiana.
Mississippi ICD-10 OB C-Section Diagnosis List	A list of ICD-10-CM diagnosis codes that support Cesarean deliveries defined by Mississippi.

Resources

Individual state Medicaid regulations, manuals & fee schedules

Centers for Medicaid and CHIP, Early Elective Deliveries Resources

Publications and services of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)

Joint Commission National Quality Measures

History

5/18/2025	Policy Version Change State Exceptions Section: Idaho exception added History Section: Entries prior to 5/18/2023 archived
6/14/2024	Policy Version Change State Exception Section: New Mexico Added
5/31/2024	Policy Date and Version Change
9/1/2018	Policy implemented by UnitedHealthcare Community & State
7/5/2018	Policy approved by the Reimbursement Policy Oversight Committee