



دائرة الصحة
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Policy on Durable Medical Equipment (DME)

Department of Health (DOH) November 2017

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Applies To:	DOH licensed Healthcare Providers. DOH authorized Health Payers. All Health Insurance products and schemes, as applicable. All DME provided for use in the patients home.		
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ABOUT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH)

The Department of Health (DOH) is the regulative body of the Health System in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and seeks excellence in Health for the community by regulating and monitoring the health status of the population. DOH defines the strategy for the health system, monitors and analyses the health status of the population and performance of the system. In addition, DOH shapes the regulatory framework for the health system, inspects against regulations, enforce regulations, and encourages the adoption of best practices and performance targets by all health service providers. DOH also drives programs to increase awareness and adoption of healthy living standards among the residents of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in addition to regulating scope of services, premiums and reimbursement rates of the health system in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

The Health System of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi is comprehensive, encompasses the full spectrum of health services and is accessible to all residents of Abu Dhabi. The health system encompasses, providers, professionals, patients, Insurers and the regulator. Providers of health services include public and private services and the system is financed through mandatory health insurance (with the exception to Thiqa) and has three main sources of financing: Employers or Sponsors, the Government and Individuals. The Health Insurance scheme places responsibilities on any Insurer, Broker, Third Party Administrator, Health Provider, Employer, Sponsor (including educational establishments), Limited Income Investors and Insured Persons to participate in the Health Insurance Scheme.

ACRONYMS

ADL: Activities of Daily Living.

CPAP: Continuous Positive Airway Pressure.

DME: Durable Medical Equipment.

DOH: Department of Health.

ER: Emergency Room.

FDA: Food and Drug Administration.

IV: Intravenous.

KEH: Knowledge Engine for Health.

NG: Nasogastric.

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1. Introduction

The Abu Dhabi Health System encompasses a range of healthcare services including the provision of Durable Medical Equipment (DME). Durable Medical Equipment include a range of medical items that can withstand repeated use and provide a level of performance and quality for the patient’s long term functional need and medical condition. Access to DME is determined through the treating physician’s assessment of the patient’s underlying problem and prescription. Coverage for DME is determined by the patient’s insurance product and schedule of benefits.

The availability of DME within the Abu Dhabi Health System plays a key role in maintaining and improving the patient’s functional limitation and in some cases, preventing further deterioration or harm. DOH has identified the need to put in place a Policy for DME to assure eligible patients receive appropriate and timely care when needed and maximize the management of DME. Assuring better utilization of DME also plays a key role securing high-quality care, patient safety and patient centeredness over the longer term.

2. Definitions and Abbreviations

Term	Definition
Durable Medical Equipment (DME)	is a device, which: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has been approved by an international recognized healthcare regulatory agency (such as FDA, EMA, TGA, Health Canada), a credible Health Technology Assessment organisation or Ministry of Health in the UAE.• Enables the individual to perform certain tasks that he/she is unable to undertake otherwise due to a medical condition;• Is life-sustaining and/or medically and functionally necessary to meet the needs of the beneficiary;• May prevent frequent hospitalization, institutionalization, or ER visits.• Can withstand repeated use;• Is primarily and customarily used to serve a medical purpose rather than convenience or comfort;• Generally not useful to a person in the absence of an illness or injury;• Is appropriate for use in the home but may be transported to other locations to allow the individual to complete instrumental Activities of Daily Living (ADLs); and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is prescribed by a treating physician of the relevant specialty and as per the patient’s schedule of benefits. • The item is primarily and customary being utilised for medical purposes • Always refers to outpatient medical services including DME supplied on discharge. <p><u>DME includes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orthotic devices that support or correct deformities and/or abnormalities of the human body, e.g. therapeutic footwear; • Prostheses or artificial extensions that replace a missing body part, e.g. artificial limbs; • A variety of medico-technical devices such as powered and unpowered wheelchairs, semi/full electric beds and air/pressure relieving mattresses; • All medico-technical devices that adequately meets the patient medical need in the performance of Activities of Daily Living (ADLs); • Clinical items such as NG pumps, CPAP machines, portable suction, Oxygen concentrators, nebulizers, glucometers, IV pumps etc. <p><u>DME excludes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disposable medical suppliers and non-medical supplies, which are disposable in nature (e.g. blood sugar strips, catheters, undergarments, bandages, dental prosthesis and protective gloves etc.). • Equipment/device that cannot withstand repeated use. • Equipment issued to patients whilst seeking treatment outside the UAE.
Non-standard/customized DME	Medical Equipment that has certain convenience features that will adequately meet the medical needs of a specific patient.
Standard DME	DME that is not designed or customised for a specific individual’s use.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to all eligible patients, according to their insurance product, in outpatient medical settings.

4. Policy Statement

DME will be covered if they fulfill coverage criteria, are a medical necessity and are fit-for-purpose.

The DOH shall:

- 4.1 Ensure there is a comprehensive regulatory framework for reimbursement of DME as per Health Insurance Laws.
- 4.2 Ensure Abu Dhabi population's needs are met with respect to DME.
- 4.3 Set out the inclusion and exclusion criteria for DME.
- 4.4 Prepare a dynamic list of DMEs and modifiers to be used in the claiming process.
- 4.5 Strengthen quality, patient safety and patient centered care through the use of DME.
- 4.6 Arbitrate disputes between the payer and provider.
- 4.7 Set out any other requirements deemed necessary to support the effective and efficient use of DME within the Health System.
- 4.8 Implement sanctions for non-compliance with this Policy.
- 4.9 Administer its investigative process in order to determine any breach of Laws or Regulations.
- 4.10 Where a breach has been determined, undertake the necessary escalation procedures.
- 4.11 Once DOH has undertaken its investigation appropriate enforcement will be subject to DOH's determination on the level of breach or non-compliance and may include the following measures with specified timescales for compliance and/or action:
 - 4.11.1 Provide Advice;
 - 4.11.2 Set out a remedial action plan; and
 - 4.11.3 Refer the matter to the Competent Committee with a view to issuing a reprimand/notice or warning, license withdrawal, legal proceedings or any other appropriate action.

Providers and Insurers shall:

- 4.12 Comply with the requirements for access and coverage of DME found in Appendix (1).
- 4.13 Have the opportunity to appeal a DOH decision subject to satisfying the requirements of DOH appeal grounds, rules and process.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

A monitoring and evaluation framework involving Healthcare Providers, Insurers and the regulator will be developed to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Policy, and where necessary adopt changes to ensure continuous improvement within the health system.

Healthcare Providers and Insurers shall:

- 5.1 Put in place and agree on arrangements to monitor compliance with this policy in accordance with the Standard Provider Contract.
- 5.2 Report all known or suspected medical incidents or deficiencies related to DME use to DOH as per “HAAD Circular HRD/22/16 – Medical Devices Post Marketing Surveillance System”.
- 5.3 Report to DOH any issues that prevent eligible patients to access DME.

DOH shall:

- 5.4 Monitor compliance of the Policy through patient complaints, audit and inspection and DME utilization through e-claims (KEH). An evaluation framework shall be adopted to ensure the DME policy is implemented across the health system and include the following domains:
 - 5.4.1 Inputs;
 - 5.4.2 Activities;
 - 5.4.3 Outputs; and
 - 5.4.4 Outcomes.

Appendix (1): Requirements for access to DME

1. Coverage Requirements

- 1.1 Purchase of DME is covered if:
 - 1.1.1 In accordance with the insurance product.
 - 1.1.2 Determined to be medically necessary.
 - 1.1.3 It meets all of the DME inclusion criteria specified in this Appendix.
- 1.2 Coverage for DMEs shall include the following:
 - 1.2.1 Purchase of prescribed equipment.
 - 1.2.2 Purchase of “standard” DME unless the need of “above the standard specifications” is supported by evidence justifying its medical necessity.
 - 1.2.3 Supplies necessary for effective functioning of the DME.
 - 1.2.4 Replacement of DMEs shall be authorised as per the life span of the equipment and manufacturers recommendations, normal wear and tear as per manufacturers guidelines or in cases of damage due to no fault of the patient.
- 1.3 Coverage is limited to the agreed price and markup as per the Standard Provider Contract (SPC).
- 1.4 Coverage is limited to the least costly and clinically appropriate DME (cost-effective/value for money) without compromising patient safety and medical needs.
- 1.5 Patients may top up their coverage to purchase a more costly DME of preference.
- 1.6 DME benefit shall only be available through the Payers network of DOH licensed Healthcare Providers.
- 1.7 Damage of purchased equipment due to manufacturing defects shall be covered under the manufacturer/vendor’s standard warranty.

2. Exclusions to Coverage Requirements

DME that fall under the following areas will not be covered:

- 2.1 Repair or replacement of purchased equipment damaged due to neglect, theft, and abuse.
- 2.2 Duplicate equipment that is intended to be used as a back-up device, for multiple residences or for travelling.
- 2.3 Equipment that is primarily and customarily used for a non-medical purposes, although it may have some remote medically related use for convenience; e.g. air conditioner use by a cardiac patient to lower room temperature.
- 2.4 DME that meets the same medical need as the old item that the member is using but in a more efficient manner, convenient or cosmetically appealing when there is no change in the member’s condition.
- 2.5 DME that have been purchased by the patient outside the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

3. Healthcare Providers and Insurers' Requirements

- 3.1 The treating physician must always conduct evidence based DME assessment prior to the issuance of a DME prescription.
- 3.2 The prescribing specialist/consultant must compile the necessary documentation to support the purchase or replacement of the DME; and when required, submit the required documentation (including risk assessment) to the payer for authorization.
- 3.3 Prior authorisation must be issued to the payer for DME coverage above 1,000 AED per item.
- 3.4 Agree on a DME list and reference prices for reimbursable DME and update this list accordingly.
- 3.5 Healthcare Providers and Payers must make use of applicable HCPCS codes and modifiers for billing available on Shafafiya: <http://www.haad.ae/haad/tabid/1500/Default.aspx>
- 3.6 Payers shall cover replacement due to normal life of DME as per manufactures guidelines.