



HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY

UHMS, CMS & Insurance Medical Policies

- **Presenter: Ashley Abrams**
- **Role: Henry Ford Safety Director**
- **Location: Chesterfield, MI**
- **Time in the field: 15 years**





UHMS Undersea Hyperbaric Medical Society

The Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society (UHMS) is an international non-profit organization serving members from more than 67 countries. The UHMS is the primary source of scientific information for diving and hyperbaric medicine physiology worldwide.



UHMS Approved Indications

1. Air or Gas Embolism
2. A-Carbon Monoxide Poisoning B-Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Complicated by Cyanide Poisoning
3. Clostridial Myositis and Myonecrosis (Gas Gangrene)
4. Crush Injury, Compartment Syndrome, and Other Acute Traumatic Ischemias
5. Decompression Sickness
6. Arterial Inefficiencies:
A-Central Retinal Artery Occlusion
B-Enhancement of Healing in Selected Problem Wounds
07. Severe Anemia
08. Intracranial Abscess
09. Necrotizing Soft Tissue Infections
10. Osteomyelitis (Refractory
11. Delayed Radiation Injury (Soft Tissue and Bony Necrosis)
12. Compromised Grafts and Flaps
13. Acute Thermal Burn Injury
- 14. Idiopathic Sudden Sensorineural Hearing Loss**
- 15. Avascular Necrosis (Aseptic Osteonecrosis)**



CMS

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

CMS is the federal agency that provides health coverage to more than 160 million through Medicare, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and the Health Insurance Marketplace. CMS works in partnership with the entire health care community to improve quality, equity and outcomes in the health care system.



CMS Approved Indications

- Acute Carbon Monoxide Intoxication
- Decompression Illness
- Gas Embolism
- Gas Gangrene
- Acute Traumatic Peripheral Ischemia
- Crush Injuries and Suturing of Severed Limbs
- Progressive Necrotizing Infections (Necrotizing Fasciitis)
- Acute Peripheral Arterial Insufficiency
- Preparation and Preservation of Compromised Skin Grafts
- Chronic Refractory Osteomyelitis
Osteoradionecrosis
- Soft Tissue Radionecrosis
- Cyanide Poisoning
- Actinomycosis
- Diabetic Wounds of the Lower Extremities

UHMS & CMS

Many insurances dictate either the CMS or UHMS approved indications in their medical policy. However, they may add or subtract indications.

This is why it is crucial that we consult the medical policy for each patient to ensure we follow the guidelines and policy of their insurer. Oftentimes we will receive calls that are not a common indication for hyperbaric. A good rule of thumb is to obtain their insurance details and review their medical policy to confirm their candidacy for hyperbaric oxygen therapy. It's also important to remember that just because it's listed on the medical policy, it does not mean there aren't still elements of medical necessity that need to be met or that the indication is appropriate in the outpatient setting.

UHMS & CMS

How do you check an insurance medical policy? Finding a medical policy is not difficult. Often the back of the insurance card will have a website where you can find this information. If not, a simple google search of the insurance plan followed by the key phrase “medical policy” should lead you to their page where you can then search for “hyperbaric.” If you cannot find a posted medical policy online, you may be able to use the associated insurance portal or call the provider line on their insurance card and provide the ICD 10 codes and procedure codes to have an agent reference their policy.
(Make sure to document any and all communication!)

Plan Types

Medicaid plans and Medicare Advantage plans generally adhere to CMS guidelines for HBOT, though there can be some variation in implementation and coverage specifics.

Medicare Advantage plans are required to provide AT LEAST the same coverage as original Medicare. Some Medicare Advantage plans may have additional requirements or pre-auth processes.

Medicaid programs are state-administered and must comply with federal guidelines, but they have discretion in determining specific coverage policies. While many state Medicaid programs follow CMS guidelines, there can be variations. Some states may cover HBOT for the same indications, or they could be more restrictive or expansive.

Commercial plans frequently follow CMS and/or UHMS guidelines, but they do not have to. Commercial policies may be able to make circumstantial allowances or have expanded covered indications. With these types of policies, it is easier to advocate for patients to have HBOT for reasons outside our norm.

For these reasons, checking the medical policy is so important.

Plan Verification & Pre-Authorization

Verifying insurance plans is important to not only guarantee coverage but to confirm the correct medical policy and approved indications for HBOT. For example, Blue Cross Blue Shield can be a commercial plan, Medicaid product, or a Medicare Advantage plan. They all could cover different indications for HBOT with varying elements of medical necessity. It's important that we get this right!

For questions regarding insurance verification and pre-authorization, there is a recorded powerpoint on the member's portal called "How To: Pre-Auth" with the associated "Pre-Auth Worksheet".

Quiz



UHMS, CMS & Insurance Medical Policies

Question 1

**Idiopathic Sudden
Sensorineural Loss is an
approved indication?**

**(True or False? Explain
below.)**

Answer 1

TRUE

**Idiopathic Sudden
Sensorineural Loss is an
approved indication by
UHMS not CMS.**

ISSHL is not a covered indication by Medicare or Medicaid. If the patient has private insurance, SerenaGroup® can assist in checking the patient's coverage and benefits.

Question 2

All approved indications by CMS are able to be treated in an outpatient setting?

(True or False?)

Answer 2

FALSE

Not all hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) indications covered by CMS can be treated in an outpatient setting. While many conditions can be managed in an outpatient setting, certain conditions, particularly those requiring immediate or intensive care, may necessitate an inpatient hospital setting.

Example conditions commonly treated in outpatient settings:

Diabetic Wounds:

HBOT is covered as an adjunctive therapy for diabetic wounds of the lower extremities when other standard wound therapies have failed.

Wound Healing:

Outpatient HBOT centers can be beneficial for chronic wounds and other conditions where the patient no longer requires intensive hospital care but needs continued treatment.

Example conditions that may require an inpatient setting:

Decompression Sickness:

This condition often requires immediate intervention and may necessitate an inpatient setting for monitoring and management.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:

Similar to decompression sickness, carbon monoxide poisoning may require immediate attention and intensive care, potentially requiring an inpatient hospital setting.

Crush Injuries and Suturing of Severed Limbs:

These conditions may require immediate attention and monitoring, and the initial treatment may be initiated in an inpatient setting to address the dire nature and complications.

Important Considerations:

Adjunctive Therapy:

HBOT is often used as an adjunctive therapy, meaning it's used in addition to standard treatments.

Hospital-Based Treatment Centers:

Many hospitals have hyperbaric oxygen treatment centers that offer both inpatient and outpatient services, ensuring access to a wide range of resources.

Patient Needs:

The specific needs of the patient, including the severity of their condition and the need for ongoing monitoring, will determine whether an inpatient or outpatient setting is most appropriate.

Local Coverage Determinations (LCDs):

Specific LCDs may exist for certain states, providing further guidance on the coverage of HBOT for different condition

Question 3

Name an indication that is on the UHMS list but is not on the CMS list.

Answer 3

EXAMPLES

- ❖ Idiopathic Sudden Sensorineural Hearing Loss
- ❖ Severe Anemia
- ❖ Intracranial Abscess
- ❖ Acute Thermal Burn Injury
- ❖ Avascular Necrosis

THANK YOU!
-Your Henry Ford HBO Team.



SerenaGroup
Building the Nation's Leading Wound Care Team

**HENRY
FORD
HEALTH**

Round Table



- Final reminder on NEW daily/weekly checklists and emergency chamber cards
- Update on Troy, MI chamber fire
- NEW Pre-Dive Checklist Protocol
- Looking for anyone who wants to help review policies and procedures

Attendance: April



In Attendance:

- Henry Ford
- Chambersburg
- Fairview
- Inspira
- Monroeville
- Akron
- Jackson

Absent:

- ACMH
- MGMC



NEXT MONTH

Topic: Clinical & Non-Clinical Emergencies & Preparedness

*June 3rd, 2025
At 12:15pm eastern time*

Has Presented In 2025...

- Ally
- ACMH
- Akron
- Chambersburg
- Henry Ford

Has NOT Presented In 2025...

- Fairview
- Inspira
- Jackson
- MGMC
- Monroeville



Contact Us

QUESTIONS/PROBLEMS

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THANK YOU !!!

