

PROTOCOLS FOR NUTRITION EDUCATORS

Nutrition Educators will be responsible for first determining the eligibility of members to receive services, for meeting the elements of nutrition education and documenting services as indicated below, and, in order to receive payment, for submitting claim forms to CenCal Health.

Nutrition Educators providing medical nutrition therapy (MNT) services are reimbursable by CenCal Health when conducted by a Registered Dietitian (RD) working as or with a contracted provider. Under the CenCal Health Nutrition benefit, members are entitled to an initial assessment not to exceed 2 hours per year; a re-assessment and intervention not to exceed 2 hours per month; and group sessions not to exceed 5 hours per a 12 month period. Additional services beyond the benefit limitations require prior authorization.

Eligibility

Nutrition Educators must confirm that the member presenting in his/her office is eligible for services under CenCal Health and is assigned to the referring PCP for the month in which he/she is to render services. This can be accomplished by verifying eligibility through one of CenCal Health's systems. Information regarding Eligibility is in the Member Services Section of this Provider Manual.

In the event the member is not eligible under the program(s) administered by CenCal Health, payment for any services provided to the member will not be the responsibility of CenCal Health.

Documentation of Services

Documentation for outpatient nutrition education shall include:

1. Pre-program assessment. Assessment of the member's needs with the member's participation.
2. Member education plan. An individualized education plan for a program based on the needs assessment and shared with the member and member support persons.
3. Content of educational service, dates delivered, and instructor names and qualifications. The education program will include goals and objectives, target audience (patient and support persons), setting, possible referrals, procedures, and methods of evaluation.
4. Post program assessment.
5. Follow-up plan.
6. Record of coordination between providers. All information about the member's educational experience will be incorporated into the member's permanent medical or educational record.

Authorizations

Nutrition Educators are required to obtain a **Referral Authorization Form (RAF)** from the member's PCP for certain services **prior to providing services**. Additionally, some services may require a Treatment Authorization Request (TAR) to be approved by CenCal Health if the services are beyond the limitations set for the benefit. Please refer to the Authorization Section of this Provider Manual for more information.

- **97802** - Nutrition Therapy – initial assessment – RAF waived
- **97803** - Nutrition Therapy – re-assessment and intervention – *RAF required*
- **97804** - Nutrition Therapy – group session, 2 or more – RAF waived

- ❖ When the member is being referred to any County FQHC Clinic for any Nutrition Educator services, the first visit requires a RAF from the PCP.

NOTE: a specified nutrition education service rendered simultaneously to two or more individuals constitutes a group session, and no RAF is required for this group session. If a SBHI or SLOHI member is Special Class, no RAF is required.

Additional authorization for nutritional education services:

Nutrition services that **exceed the frequency limitations** will require additional authorization in the form of a **Treatment Authorization Request (TAR)** for SBHI and SLOHI, or an **Authorization Request (AR)** for HF, HK, PP2 and IHSS:

- **97802** - Nutrition Therapy – initial assessment – TAR/AR required when services exceed 2 hours per year
- **97803** - Nutrition Therapy – re-assessment and intervention – TAR/AR required when services exceed 2 hours per month
- **97804** - Nutrition Therapy – group session, 2 or more – TAR/AR required when services exceed 10 sessions per member per 12 month period

Billing for Covered Services

Nutrition Educators bill CenCal Health for the medical nutrition services he or she has provided to the eligible member. In the event the member has other coverage, or third-party liability is involved, the Nutrition Educator shall follow the terms and conditions of his/her Nutrition Educator Service Agreement with CenCal Health, or as indicated in “Other Health Coverage” in the Claims Section of this Provider Manual.

Co-payments

No co-payments for Nutritional Education are required for any program, i.e., SBHI, SLOHI, HF, HK, PP2 and IHSS.

Reimbursement for Nutrition Education Services

Claims submitted to CenCal Health for eligible members for outpatient nutritional education, under the provider’s tax identification number (TIN), or a billing number agreed to by the parties, will be reimbursed as follows:

Code	Description	Type	Unit	Frequency (maximum)	Referral Auth. Form	Reimbursement
97802	Nutrition Therapy – initial assessment	Individual	15 minutes	2 hours per year	Waived	\$22.41 per 15 minutes
97803	Nutrition Therapy – re-assessment and intervention	Individual	15 minutes	2 hours per month	Required	\$20.20 per 15 minutes
97804	Nutrition Therapy	Group (2 or more)	30 minutes	10 sessions per 12 month period	Waived	\$17.82 per session per participant

If a hospital provides nutrition education to inpatients at the hospital, such educational efforts should be noted in the member’s chart; however, no additional payment for these services outside of the agreed upon per diem rate will be paid to the hospital.