



FH
[REDACTED]

STATE OF WISCONSIN
Division of Hearings and Appeals

In the Matter of

[REDACTED]

DECISION

MPA/144735

PRELIMINARY RECITALS

Pursuant to a petition filed October 22, 2012, under Wis. Stat., §49.45(5), to review a decision by the Division of Health Care Access and Accountability (DHCAA) to deny Medical Assistance (MA) authorization for gastric bypass surgery, a hearing was held on November 16, 2012, by telephone.

The issue for determination is whether petitioner meets the criteria for gastric bypass.

PARTIES IN INTEREST:

Petitioner:

[REDACTED]

Respondent:

Department of Health Services
1 West Wilson Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

By: Written submission of Richard M. Carr, MD, MS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:

Brian C. Schneider
Division of Hearings and Appeals

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Petitioner (CARES # [REDACTED]) is a resident of Trempealeau County who receives MA.
2. Petitioner is 5'4", weighs 263 pounds, and has a body mass index of 45.2 kg/m².
3. On September 17, 2012, Gunderson Clinic, Ltd. requested prior authorization for gastric bypass surgery, PA no. [REDACTED]. By a letter dated September 26, 2012, the DHCAA denied the request.
4. Petitioner has no emergency comorbid condition.

DISCUSSION

Wis. Stat., §49.46(2)(f) provides as follows concerning MA benefits: “Benefits under this subsection may not include payment for gastric bypass surgery or gastric stapling surgery unless it is performed because of a medical emergency.”

The criteria for approval of a gastric bypass, as of September 1, 2011, are as follows:

The approval criteria for PA requests for covered bariatric surgery procedures include ... the following:

□ The member has a body mass index greater than 35 with at least one documented high-risk, life-limiting comorbid medical conditions capable of producing a significant decrease in health status that are demonstrated to be unresponsive to appropriate treatment. There is evidence that significant weight loss can substantially improve the following comorbid conditions:

- Sleep apnea.
- Poorly controlled Diabetes Mellitus while compliant with appropriate medication regimen.
- Poorly controlled hypertension while compliant with appropriate medication regimen.
- Obesity-related cardiomyopathy.

ForwardHealth Update, No. 2011-44, effective September 1, 2011. There also must be documented prior attempts to lose weight, three months participation in a weight loss program, and medical and psychological evaluations to determine if the person is an appropriate candidate for such surgery.

The use of the Department’s periodic Updates to set MA coverage guidelines is approved by law. See, Wis. Admin. Code, §DHS 108.02(4). The criteria at issue here were drafted because of the mandate that gastric bypass is limited to medical emergencies. Wis. Admin. Code, §DHS 107.06(4)(h).

The prior authorization request included no information on the specifics of petitioner’s diabetes and hypertension. Prior to the hearing petitioner submitted medical records including tests. The test results show petitioner to be in normal ranges in virtually every area, and the reports show petitioner’s diabetes and hypertension to be adequately controlled.

In her testimony petitioner described her weight loss history, problems with yeast infections, and chronic pain. The problem is that those areas are not covered by the approval criteria (there must have been prior weight loss attempts but even if so there must be a significant threat to the person’s health as described above). Because state law requires a medical emergency, I must conclude that the DHCAA correctly denied the requested surgery.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The DHCAA correctly denied the request for gastric bypass surgery because there was no evidence of a medical emergency in the request.

THEREFORE, it is

ORDERED

That the petition for review herein be and the same is hereby dismissed.

REQUEST FOR A REHEARING

This is a final administrative decision. If you think this decision is based on a serious mistake in the facts or the law, you may request a rehearing. You may also ask for a rehearing if you have found new evidence which would change the decision. Your request must explain what mistake the Administrative Law Judge made and why it is important or you must describe your new evidence and tell why you did not have it at your first hearing. If you do not explain these things, your request will have to be denied.

To ask for a rehearing, send a written request to the Division of Hearings and Appeals, P.O. Box 7875, Madison, WI 53707-7875. Send a copy of your request to the other people named in this decision as "PARTIES IN INTEREST." Your request for a rehearing must be received no later than 20 days after the date of the decision. Late requests cannot be granted.

The process for asking for a rehearing is in Wis. Stat. § 227.49. A copy of the statutes can be found at your local library or courthouse.

APPEAL TO COURT

You may also appeal this decision to Circuit Court in the county where you live. Appeals must be served and filed with the appropriate court no more than 30 days after the date of this hearing decision (or 30 days after a denial of rehearing, if you ask for one).

For purposes of appeal to circuit court, the Respondent in this matter is the Department of Health Services. After filing the appeal with the appropriate court, it must be served on the Secretary of that Department, either personally or by certified mail. The address of the Department is: 1 West Wilson Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53703. A copy should also be sent to the Division of Hearings and Appeals, 5005 University Avenue, Suite 201, Madison, WI 53705-5400.

The appeal must also be served on the other "PARTIES IN INTEREST" named in this decision. The process for appeals to the Circuit Court is in Wis. Stat. §§ 227.52 and 227.53.

Given under my hand at the City of Madison,
Wisconsin, this 20th day of November, 2012

\sBrian C. Schneider
Administrative Law Judge
Division of Hearings and Appeals



State of Wisconsin \DIVISION OF HEARINGS AND APPEALS

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The preceding decision was sent to the following parties on November 20, 2012.

Division of Health Care Access And Accountability