

Educational Versus Restorative Services

April 12, 2006

XYZ Health Plan
500 Main Street, Suite 101
Washington, DC 20011

Re: Katherine Lowe
Member ID#: 321654789
Member Name: Jennifer Lowe
Group Name: VWCY
Group ID#: 2500

Dear Claims Department:

I am writing in support of payment for speech-language pathology services for Katherine, daughter of plan participant Jennifer Lowe, by XYZ Health Plan. XYZ denied payment for this service because it is considered "educational and not restorative," according to the attached letter (add date) from XYZ Health Plan summarizing its position. Medical history of the patient reveals that the child's speech impairment is due to illness. Speech-language pathology treatment is medically necessary to treat Katherine's speech-language disorder according to Dr. David Jones (attached). Dr. Jones reports a history of recurrent otitis media with conductive hearing loss as the basis of Katherine's speech-language impairment.

Determination of medical necessity must consider whether the service is essential and appropriate to the diagnosis and/or treatment of an illness or injury. Speech-language services are "essential and appropriate" in treating Katherine's illness-related communication needs. Additional medical history also reveals extensive dental work beginning at a very young age. An enclosed policy statement issued by the American Academy of Pediatrics outlines the correlation between middle ear disease with hearing impairment and its effect on development of speech and language.

Speech-language pathology services are not educational in nature, but instead are a health-related service, in this case, provided for treatment of a medical condition. The services are recognized as health care services by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

XYZ notes that the speech-language pathology services are not "restorative" in nature. However, these services are restorative because speech function was lost due to illness, that is, middle ear disease. The requirement that one must first possess an ability and then lose it does not allow for the medically related therapy needs of infants and young children. It essentially excludes treatment for the youngest of your beneficiaries.

I am requesting your reconsideration of coverage of speech-language treatment for Katherine. The services are for an illness related condition; they are a health care service; and are medically necessary.

Sincerely,

Jane A. Smith, PhD, CCC-SLP

SAMPLE