Policy Title: Urgent and Emergent Care
Policy Number: I.04

Primary Department: Medical Management
Affiliated Department(s): N/A
NCQA Standard: N/A
URAC Standard: N/A

Last Revision Date: 11/05/2015
Next Review Date: 12/2016
Revision Dates: 12/16/2011; 10/15/2012; 11/26/2013; 11/20/2014; 11/05/2015
Effective Date: 11/19/2010
Next Review Date: 12/2016

Special Instructions Alert:

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Definitions:

Emergency Medical Condition
A medical condition manifesting itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity (including severe pain) such that the absence of immediate medical attention could reasonably be expected to result in placing the patient's health in serious jeopardy, serious impairment to bodily functions, or serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part. With respect to a pregnant woman who is having active contractions, a medical emergency is defined as a circumstance that demands time sensitive clinical intervention, such that a transfer to another hospital prior to delivery would result in an increased risk to the life/health of the mother and/or unborn child. In summary, a medical emergency is a circumstance that poses an immediate threat to a patient’s life, limb, bodily function, or body parts (including eyesight, etc.) or will result in significant unnecessary suffering (severe acute pain).

EMTALA
The Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (42 U.S.C. 1395dd)

Policy:
This policy will define the difference between urgent and emergent conditions to be used in the determination of medical necessity.
Procedure:
Meridian Health Plan follows the applicable requirements and definitions of the federal Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA). Examples of emergency situations include, but are not limited to, the following:
- No pulse
- Inability to breathe/respiratory distress
- Spinal cord or back injury
- Severe eye injuries
- Broken bones
- Uncontrollable bleeding
- Head/brain injury
- Poisoning or overdose, verified or suspected
- Seizure, loss of consciousness, or acute alteration of mental status
- Persistent chest or abdominal pain or pressure
- Acute onset of numbness, paralysis, or paresis of an arm and/or leg
- Sudden slurred speech, visual changes or weakness
- Major thermal, chemical, or electrical burns
- Intense pain
- Severe allergic/anaphylactic reaction to an insect bite, medication or food
- Premature labor
- Septic shock

Urgent care services are medically necessary services which are required for an illness or injury that would not result in further disability or death if not treated immediately, but require professional attention and have the potential to develop such a threat if treatment is delayed longer than 24 hours. Examples of urgent care situations include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Minor lacerations
- Urinary tract infections
- Earaches
- Migraine headaches
- Sprains
- Rising fever

If the medical findings from the screening indicate the beneficiary’s condition does not meet the definition of an emergency medical condition, but requires additional, follow-up treatment, the beneficiaries should be referred to their primary care provider to obtain treatment. However, treatment may be rendered in the ED and does not require prior authorization.

Special Instructions: N/A

CPT/HCPCS Codes:

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Medical Management Policy:

Approved by: __________________________________

Corporate Chief Operating Officer Date: 01/13/2016

Reviewed and approved by Medical Policy and Procedures Committee: Date: 11/05/2015

Reviewed and approved by Medical Policy Operations Committee: Date: 12/04/2015

Reviewed and approved by Physician Advisory Committee: Date: 12/18/2015

Reviewed and approved by Healthcare Compliance Subcommittee: Date: 01/13/2016

References:

1. Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act-- 42 USC § 1395DD
5. 42 U.S. Code § 1395dd - Examination and treatment for emergency medical conditions and women in labor.
   Retrieved from: https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/42/1395dd

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