

Asthma Care Coverage Project: Data Collection Methodology

To be able to determine if a state Medicaid program is providing access to guidelines-based asthma treatment and services, data must be collected. Below is the methodology used to collect the data, including potential data sources, processes and how common situations will be addressed.

Defining the Data

All criteria and barriers that are being tracked are defined in the [Asthma Guidelines-Based Care Coverage Project: Benchmarks for Key Aspects of Optimal Coverage](#) document. The American Lung Association developed this document in collaboration with an advisory group that convened in September 2015 and comprised of representatives from various stakeholder and coalition groups. The advisory group provided key input and guidance to the American Lung Association, which created the Benchmark document¹. The seven areas of coverage include quick relief and controller medications, medical devices, allergen testing and immunotherapy, home visits and interventions, and self-management education. For more information on each of these areas of coverage and associated barriers, please refer to our benchmark document.

Collecting Data

The Lung Association conducts its own primary research to determine state Medicaid program coverage for comprehensive asthma guidelines-based care. This research includes reviewing Medicaid State Plans and State Plan Amendments (SPA), formularies, preferred drug lists, member handbooks, provider manuals and any other related documents for each state Medicaid program. If the program has managed care plans, the process is repeated for each individual managed care plan and the data from each plan is then combined and interpreted to determine the overall coverage value.

In addition to collecting the data on coverage of the medication or service, any related barriers to the seven areas of medication or service are also being collected and recorded. A Source List is also created with the relevant documentation gathered during data collection.

Between December 13, 2015 and June 17, 2016, the Lung Association collected data on 23 states funded by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention National Asthma Control Program for FY 2016. Beginning on July 1, 2016, the Lung Association will collect data on the additional 27 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Confirming Data

The Lung Association seeks confirmation of its data findings with each state Medicaid office. Each state Medicaid office was provided with a copy of the coverage data categorized by managed care plan and asked to confirm its accuracy. Any changes to the data are supplemented with written plan documentation.

Publishing Data

The data are compiled and published on the Lung Association website (lung.org/asthma-care-coverage), and will be updated annually or when new information is available. For more information on how data are presented and its interpretation, please refer to the accompanying [Glossary](#).

Medications (Fast-Acting and Controller)

Medication coverage is determined primarily by its inclusion on plan formularies or preferred drug lists.

1. The medication is considered covered if it is listed on the formulary or preferred drug list - it can be either the brand name or the generic medication. The Lung Association is brand neutral, to the extent that there is no particular preference of a brand name when determining coverage of medications.
2. The generic or brand name that is available with the fewest barriers associated to its coverage will be used to determine the extent of coverage for that medication. If both a generic and brand name are available with the same number of barriers associated with each of their coverage, then, all the barriers between the generic and brand will be considered.
3. If a medication is listed as a “non-preferred” medication, it will be counted as covered with the appropriate barriers.
4. If a medication is not on the formulary or preferred drug list, it will not be considered covered, unless it is specified somewhere else in writing or information is provided by the state Medicaid office in writing.
5. For generic names, the second word of the generic does not necessarily have to be present in order to be considered as a covered generic (i.e., “albuterol sulfate” can be considered as covered if “albuterol” is found in the formulary or preferred drug list).
6. Medications should be in the correct form. For example, medications in ointment or cream form are not considered covered; however, solutions are permissible. Additionally, some medication types are in a specific form. For example, inhaled corticosteroids require the inhaled form, and nasal or spray forms will not be considered as covered.
7. Any final questions or issues are resolved with assistance from the American Lung Association’s senior scientific and/or medical advisors.

Devices

The devices being tracked include nebulizers, peak flow meters and valved-holding chambers. For purposes of data collection, spacers are not considered valved-holding chambers because not all spacers are necessarily valved-holding chambers.

Allergen Testing²

Allergen testing includes both skin testing and in vitro testing and the Lung Association also determines whether both types of testing are covered for all Medicaid enrollees. More information can be found in our [Glossary](#). If using CPT (Current Procedural Terminology) codes to verify data, 95004 or 95024 are the CPT codes for skin testing and 95017, 95027 or 95028 are the CPT codes for in vitro testing. If one of the codes is reimbursed, the testing is considered covered.

Allergy Treatment – Allergen Immunotherapy³

If CPT codes are needed to determine whether coverage exists, the relevant CPT codes are 95115, 95117, 95120, 95125, 95144, 95165, 95170, 95180 and 95199. If one of the listed codes is covered, treatment is considered covered.

Home Visits

To determine if a low-intensity intervention is available to Medicaid enrollees, the criteria listed in the benchmark document is used. Any state Medicaid program offering a moderate or major

intensity intervention to at least some part of the population will be noted. Information collected from other organizations, such as [Green and Healthy Homes Initiative](#) or the [National Center for Healthy Housing](#), can also be used to determine the existence of pilot programs in state Medicaid programs.

Self-Management Education

For the purposes of this data collection, wellness programs or disease management programs are not counted as self-management education. The following CPT codes can be used to code for asthma self-management education: 94664, 98960-98962, 99401-99404, 99411-99412 and 99441. If appropriate, CPT codes can be used to determine coverage.

¹ It is important to note that an organization's participation in the advisory group does not equate to its endorsement of the Benchmark.

² CPT codes: <https://www.aaaai.org/Aaaai/media/MediaLibrary/PDF Documents/Practice Management/PM Resource Guide/Chapter-6-Coding-and-billing-basics.pdf>

³ CPT codes: <https://www.aaaai.org/Aaaai/media/MediaLibrary/PDF Documents/Practice Management/PM Resource Guide/Chapter-6-Coding-and-billing-basics.pdf>