



PA 33 Specialized-Adaptive Car Seat Clinical Criteria

Policy Number: PA 33

Last Review Date:

Effective Date: 10/01/2026

Policy

Maryland Care, Inc., dba Maryland Physicians Care (MPC) utilizes this clinical policy when specific criteria are not available for the requested Specialized-Adaptive car seat. Specialized car seats are safety and positioning devices used for children with special needs who no longer fit in conventional car seats but continue to need special support or conventional car seats are not medically appropriate.

Specialized car seats must be prescribed by a licensed in-network medical provider, enrolled in the Maryland Medicaid program, operating within their scope of practice who is knowledgeable in orthopedic, neurology, and/or pediatrics, and is knowledgeable about special needs equipment, and provides medical care to the member. Some members may need a car bed rather than a car seat (example: a child with Pierre Robin sequence by need to be positioned prone during car rides to maintain an open airway).

All requests for a specialized car seat require a physician's certificate of medical necessity and a physical or occupational therapy evaluation with supporting documentation.

A specialized car seat evaluation must address issues including:

- Airway integrity;
- Skin integrity;
- Circulatory integrity;
- Allowance of voluntary movement where it does not negatively impact safety;
- Proper positioning;
- Type of release mechanism to ensure the safety of members with behavioral and/or judgement issues;
- The ability of the device to support the member properly despite seizure activity or muscle spasms;
- The ability of the device to support a growing child over time including growth in weight and height; AND
- Parent/caregiver ability to consistently and properly use the device for its intended purpose and according to the manufacturer's specifications.

MPC considers Specialized-Adaptive car seats medically necessary when all the following criteria are met:

- The member cannot fit safely into a conventional car seat OR exhibit behavioral manifestations of a documented medical condition that leave the driver or member at risk of injury; AND
- The member cannot be properly supported and safe in the vehicle during normal transport,

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including turns, acceleration, decelerations, or riding over rough terrain without the requested device; AND

- The member has successfully trialed the device or a close simulation in the member's environment; AND
- The member exhibits one or more of the following medical conditions:
 - Significant head and trunk instability and/or weakness
 - Significant hypotonicity, hypertonicity, athetosis, spasticity, or muscle spasming which results in uncontrollable movement and positioning change,
 - Absence or latency of protective reactions,
 - Inability to maintain an unsupported seating position independently,
 - Severe seizure activity that results in uncontrollable movement and position change (such as tonic-clonic seizures)
 - Orthopedic disease processes resulting in significant bony fragility (for example: osteogenesis imperfecta) or significant contractures that would result in a child's inability to perform postural corrections due to vehicle motion (for example: arthrogryposis);
 - Behaviors that put the member or driver at risk of injury.

Requests for repeat device must also meet the following criteria:

- The device has been outgrown, or
- The device no longer meets the medical needs of the member, or
- The device is no longer functional through normal wear (expected to last at least 5 years), or
- The device has been in a motor vehicle accident that may have compromised its ability to protect the member.
 - The accident report is required to be submitted with the request for the replacement device.

Type of service or procedure covered

- Specialized car seats, including forward and backward facing seats, horizontal car beds and vest harnesses for beneficiaries with special needs. Specialized support components for car seats are also covered.
- The car seats acceptable must meet Federal Safety Standards, and must be able to accommodate safety adaptations, and must be able to accommodate a pediatric participant's growth.



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Limitations

The following services/devices are not covered:

- Specialized car seats for individuals without special needs as described above
- Conventional car seats and booster seats
- Vehicle modifications to accommodate car seats
- More than one specialized car seat for one member

Background

N/A

Codes/Devices/Services

Service	Description
HCPSC code K0900	Specialized-Adaptive car seats including: • Forward and backward facing seats, horizontal car beds, and vest harnesses for members with special needs, • Specialized support components for car seats. • Car seats acceptable for coverage must meet Federal Safety standards, and must be able to accommodate safety adaptations, and must be able to accommodate a pediatric member's growth.

References

Revision Log

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