

Health Care Insurer Appeals Process Information Packet

CAREFULLY READ THE INFORMATION IN THIS PACKET AND KEEP IT FOR FUTURE REFERENCE. IT HAS IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT HOW TO APPEAL DECISIONS WE MAKE ABOUT YOUR HEALTH BENEFITS

Getting Information About the Health Care Appeals Process **Help in Filing an Appeal: Standardized Forms and Consumer Assistance From the Department of Insurance**

We must send you a copy of this information packet when you first receive your policy, and within 5 business days after we receive your request for an appeal. When your insurance coverage is renewed, we must also send you a separate statement to remind you that you can request another copy of this packet. We will also send a copy of this packet to you or your treating provider at any time upon request. Just call our customer/member services number at 800-487-5553 to ask.

At the back of this packet, you will find a form that you can use for your appeal. The Arizona Insurance Department (“the Department”) developed this form to help people who want to file a health care appeal. You are not required to use it. We cannot reject your appeal if you do not use the form. If you need help in filing an appeal, or you have questions about the appeals process, you may call the Department’s Consumer Assistance Office at (602) 364-2499 or 1-(800) 325-2548 (outside Metro Phoenix area) or call us at 877-897-4328 (Toll Free).

How to Know When You Can Appeal

When we do approve a benefit or pay for a claim, we must notify you of your right to appeal that decision. Your notice may come directly from us, or through your treating provider.

Decisions You Can Appeal

You can appeal the following decisions:

1. We do not approve a benefit for a service that you or your treating provider has requested.
2. We do not pay for a service that you have already received.
3. We do not approve a benefit or pay for a claim because we say that it is not “medically necessary.”
4. We do not approve a benefit or pay for a claim because we say that it is not covered under your insurance policy, and you believe it is covered.
5. We do not notify you, within 10 business days of receiving your request, whether or not we will provide a benefit for a requested service.

Decisions You Cannot Appeal

You **cannot** appeal the following decisions:

1. You disagree with our decision as to the amount of “usual and customary charges.”
2. You disagree with how we are coordinating benefits when you have health insurance with more than one insurer.
3. You disagree with how we have applied your claims or services to your plan deductible.
4. You disagree with the amount of coinsurance or co-payments that you paid.
5. You disagree with our decision to issue or not issue a policy to you.
6. You are dissatisfied with any rate increases you may receive under your insurance policy.
7. You believe we have violated any other parts of the Arizona Insurance Code.

If you disagree with a decision that is not appealable according to this list, you may still file a complaint with the Arizona Department of Insurance, Consumer Affairs Division, 100 N 15th Avenue, Suite 261, Phoenix, Arizona 85007-2630.

Who Can File An Appeal ?

Either you or your treating provider can file an appeal on your behalf. At the end of this packet is a form that you may use for filing your appeal. You are not required to use this form, and can send us a letter with the same information. If you decide to appeal our decision to deny benefits for a service, you should tell your treating provider so the provider can help you with the information you need to present your case.

Description of the Appeals Process

There are two types of appeals: an expedited appeal for urgent matters, and a standard appeal. Each type of appeal has 3 levels. The appeals operate in a similar fashion, except that expedited appeals are processed much faster because of the patient's condition.

	Expedited Appeals <u>(for urgently needed services you have not yet received)</u>	Standard Appeals <u>(for non-urgent services or denied claims)</u>
Level 1	Expedited Medical Review	Informal Reconsideration*
Level 2	Expedited Appeal	Formal Appeal
Level 3	Expedited External Independent Medical Review	External Independent Medical Review

We make the decisions at Level 1 and Level 2. An outside reviewer, who is completely independent from our company, makes Level 3 decisions. You are not responsible to pay the costs of the external review if you choose to appeal to Level 3.

*Informal reconsideration is not available for a denied claim but will be available for pre-treatment estimates.

EXPEDITED APPEAL PROCESS FOR URGENTLY NEEDED SERVICES NOT YET PROVIDED

Level 1: Expedited Medical Review

Your request: You may obtain Expedited Medical Review of your denied request for a service that has not already been provided if:

- You have coverage with us,
- We denied your request for a covered service, and
- Your treating provider certifies in writing and provides supporting documentation that the time required to process your request through the Informal Reconsideration and Formal Appeal (about 60 days) is likely to cause a significant negative change in your medical condition. (At the end of this packet is a form that your provider may use for this purpose. Your provider could also send a letter or make up a form with similar information.) Your treating provider must send the certification and documentation to:

Name:	Quality Control	Phone: 877-897-4328 (Toll-Free)
Address:	P.O. Box 82657	Fax: 402-309-2579
	Lincoln, NE 68501-2657	

Our decision: We have 1 business day after we receive the information from the treating provider to decide whether we should change our decision and authorize your requested benefit. Within that same business day, we must call and tell you and your treating provider, and mail you our decision in writing. The written decision must explain the reasons for our decision and tell you the documents on which we based our decision.

If we deny your request: You may immediately appeal to Level 2.

If we grant your request: We will authorize the benefit and the appeal is over.

If we refer your case to Level 3: We may decide to skip Level 1 and Level 2 and send your case straight to an independent reviewer at Level 3.

Level 2: Expedited Appeal

Your request: If we deny your request at Level 1, you may request an Expedited Appeal. After you receive our Level 1 denial, your treating provider *must immediately* send us a written request (to the same person and address listed above under Level 1) to tell us you are appealing to Level 2. To help your appeal, your provider should also send us any more information (that the provider hasn't already sent us) to show why you need the requested service.

Our decision: We have 3 business days after we receive the request to make our decision.

If we deny your request: You may immediately appeal to Level 3.

If we grant your request: We will authorize the benefit and the appeal is over.

If we refer your case to Level 3: We may decide to skip Level 2 and send your case straight to an independent reviewer at Level 3.

Level 3: Expedited External, Independent Review

Your request: You may appeal to Level 3 only after you have appealed through Levels 1 and 2. You have only 5 business days after you receive our Level 2 decision to send us your written request for Expedited External Independent Review. Send your request and any more supporting information to:

Name:	Quality Control	Phone: 877-897-4328 (Toll-Free)
Address:	P.O. Box 82657	Fax: 402-309-2579
	Lincoln, Nebraska 68501-2657	

Neither you nor your treating provider is responsible for the cost of any external independent review.

The process: There are two types of Level 3 appeals, depending on the issues in your case:

(1) Medical necessity

These are cases where we have decided not to authorize a benefit because we think the services you (or your treating provider) are asking for are not medically necessary to treat your problem. For medical necessity cases, the independent reviewer is a provider retained by an outside independent review organization (“IRO”), that is procured by the Arizona Insurance Department, and not connected with our company. The IRO provider must be a provider who typically manages the condition under review.

(2) Contract coverage

These are cases where we have denied coverage because we believe the requested service is not covered under your insurance policy. For contract coverage cases, the Arizona Insurance Department is the independent reviewer.

Medical Necessity Cases

Within 1 business day of receiving your request, we must:

1. Mail a written acknowledgment of the request to the Director of Insurance, you, and your treating provider.
2. Send the Director of Insurance: the request for review; your policy, evidence of coverage or similar document; all medical records and supporting documentation used to render our decision; a summary of the applicable issues including a statement of our decision; the criteria used and clinical reasons for our decision; and the relevant portions of our utilization review guidelines. We must also include the name and credentials of the health care provider who reviewed and upheld the denial at the earlier appeal levels.

Within 2 business days of receiving our information, the Insurance Director must send all the submitted information to an external independent reviewer organization (the “IRO”).

Within 72 hours of receiving the information the IRO must make a decision and send the decision to the Insurance Director.

Within 1 business day of receiving the IRO’s decision, the Insurance Director must mail a notice of the decision to us, you, and your treating provider.

The decision (medical necessity): If the IRO decides that we should provide the benefit, we must approve the benefit. If the IRO agrees with our decision to deny the benefit, the appeal is over. Your only further option is to pursue your claim in Superior Court.

Contract Coverage Cases

Within 1 business day of receiving your request, we must:

1. Mail a written acknowledgment of your request to the Insurance Director, you, and your treating provider.
2. Send the Director of Insurance: the review, your policy, evidence of coverage or similar document, all medical records and supporting documentation used to render our decision, a summary of the applicable issues including a statement of our decision, the criteria used and any clinical reasons for our decision and the relevant portions of our utilization review guidelines.

Within 2 business days of receiving this information, the Insurance Director must determine if the service or claim is covered, issue a decision, and send a notice to us, you, and your treating provider.

Referral to the IRO for contract coverage cases: The Insurance Director is sometimes unable to determine issues of coverage. If this occurs, the Insurance Director will forward your case to an IRO. The IRO will have 72 hours to make a decision and send it to the Insurance Director. The Insurance Director will have 1 business day after receiving the IRO’s decision to send the decision to us, you, and your treating provider.

The decision (contract coverage): If you disagree with Insurance Director’s final decision on a contract coverage issue, you may request a hearing with the Office of Administrative Hearings (“OAH”). If we disagree with the Director’s final decision, we may also request a hearing before OAH. A hearing must be requested within 30 days of receiving the Director’s decision. OAH must promptly schedule and complete a hearing for appeals from expedited Level 3 decisions.

You always have the right to contact the Department of Insurance:

Arizona Department of Insurance and Financial Institutions
100 N 15th Avenue, Suite 261
Phoenix, AZ 85007-2630
(602) 364-2499 or
(800) 325-2548 (In Arizona but outside the Phoenix area)

STANDARD APPEAL PROCESS FOR NON-URGENT SERVICES AND DENIED CLAIMS

Level 1. Informal Reconsideration

Your request: You may obtain Informal Reconsideration of your denied request for a benefit if:

- You have coverage with us,
- We denied your request for a covered benefit,
- You do not qualify for an expedited appeal, and
- You or your treating provider asks for Informal Reconsideration within 2 years of the date we first deny the requested benefit by calling, writing, or faxing your request to:

Name: Quality Control Phone: 877-897-4328 (Toll-Free)
Address: P.O. Box 82657 Fax: 402-309-2579
Lincoln, Nebraska 68501-2657

Claim for a covered service already provided but not paid for: You may not obtain Informal Reconsideration of your denied request for the payment of a covered service. Instead, you may start the review process by seeking Formal Appeal.

Our acknowledgment: We have 5 business days after we receive your request for Informal Reconsideration (“the receipt date”) to send you and your treating provider a notice that we got your request.

Our decision: We have 30 days after the receipt date to decide whether we should change our decision and approve payment for your requested service. Within the same 30 days, we must send you and your treating provider our written decision. The written decision must explain the reasons for our decision and tell you the documents on which we based our decision.

If we deny your request: You have 60 days to appeal to Level 2.

If we grant your request: The decision will authorize the benefit payment and the appeal is over.

If we refer your case to Level 3: We may decide to skip Level 1 and Level 2 and send your case straight to an independent reviewer at Level 3.

Level 2. Formal Appeal

Your request: You may request Formal Appeal if: (1) we deny your request at Level 1, or (2) you have an unpaid claim and we did not provide a Level 1 review. After you receive our Level 1 denial, you or your treating provider must send us a written request within 60 days to tell us you are appealing to Level 2. If we did not provide a Level 1 review of your denied claim, you have 2 years from our first denial notice to request Formal Appeal. To help us make a decision on your appeal, you or your provider should also send us any more information (that you haven’t already sent us) to show why we should approve the requested benefit or pay the claim. Send your appeal request and information to:

Name: Quality Control Phone: 877-897-4328 (Toll-Free)
Address: P.O. Box 82657 Fax: 402-309-2579
Lincoln, Nebraska 68501-2657

Our acknowledgment: We have 5 business days after we receive your request for Formal Appeal (“the receipt date”) to send you and your treating provider a notice that we got your request.

Our decision: For a denied service that you have not received, we have 30 days after the receipt date to decide whether we should change our decision and approve your requested benefit. For denied claims, we have 60 days to decide whether we should change our decision and pay your claim. We will send you and your treating provider our decision in writing. The written decision must explain the reasons for our decision and tell you the documents on which we based our decision.

If we deny your request or claim: You have up to 4 months to appeal to Level 3.

If we grant your request: We will approve the benefit or pay the claim and the appeal is over.

If we refer your case to Level 3: We may decide to skip Level 2 and send your case straight to an independent reviewer at Level 3.

Level 3: External, Independent Review

Your request: You may appeal to Level 3 only after you have appealed through Levels 1 and 2. You have up to 4 months after you receive our Level 2 decision to send us your written request for External Independent Review. Send your request and any more supporting information to:

Name:	Quality Control	Phone:	877-897-4328 (Toll-Free)
Address:	P.O. Box 82657 Lincoln, Nebraska 68501-2657	Fax:	402-309-2579

Neither you nor your treating provider is responsible for the cost of any external independent review.

The process: There are two types of Level 3 appeals, depending on the issues in your case:

(1) Medical necessity

These are cases where we have decided not to pay a claim because we think the services that were provided were not medically necessary to treat your problem. For medical necessity cases, the independent reviewer is a provider retained by an outside independent review organization (IRO), procured by the Arizona Insurance Department, and not connected with our company. For medical necessity cases, the provider must be a provider who typically manages the condition under review.

(2) Contract Coverage

These are cases where we have denied coverage because we believe the requested service is not covered under your insurance policy. For contract coverage cases, the Arizona Insurance Department is the independent reviewer.

Medical Necessity Cases

Within 5 business days of receiving your request, we must:

1. Mail a written acknowledgment of the request to the Director of Insurance, you, and your treating provider.
2. Send the Director of Insurance: the request for review; your policy, evidence of coverage or similar document; all medical records and supporting documentation used to render our decision; a summary of the applicable issues including a statement of our decision; the criteria used and clinical reasons for our decision; and the relevant portions of our utilization review guidelines. We must also include the name and credentials of the health care provider who reviewed and upheld the denial at the earlier appeal levels.

Within 5 days of receiving our information, the Insurance Director must send all the submitted information to an external independent review organization (the "IRO").

Within 21 days of receiving the information the IRO must make a decision and send the decision to the Insurance Director.

Within 5 business days of receiving the IRO's decision, the Insurance Director must mail a notice of the decision to us, you, and your treating provider.

The decision (medical necessity): If the IRO decides that we should provide the benefit or pay the claim, we must approve the benefit or pay the claim. If the IRO agrees with our decision to deny the benefit or payment, the appeal is over. Your only further option is to pursue your claim in Superior Court.

Contract Coverage Cases

Within 5 business days of receiving your request, we must:

1. Mail a written acknowledgment of your request to the Insurance Director, you, and your treating provider.
2. Send the Director of Insurance: the request for review; your policy, evidence of coverage or similar document; all medical records and supporting documentation used to render our decision; a summary of the applicable issues including a statement of our decision; the criteria used and any clinical reasons for our decision; and the relevant portions of our utilization review guidelines.

Within 15 business days of receiving this information, the Insurance Director must determine if the service or claim is covered, issue a decision, and send a notice to us, you, and your treating provider. If the Director decides that we should provide the service or pay the claim, we must do so.

Referral to the IRO for contract coverage cases: The Insurance Director is sometimes unable to determine issues of coverage. If this occurs, the Insurance Director will forward your case to an IRO. The IRO will have 21 days to make a decision and send it to the Insurance Director. The Insurance Director will have 5 business days after receiving the IRO's decision to send the decision to us, you, and your treating provider.

The decision (contract coverage): If you disagree with the Insurance Director's final decision on a coverage issue, you may request a hearing with the Office of Administrative Hearings ("OAH"). If we disagree with the Director's determination of coverage issues, we may also request a hearing at OAH. Hearings must be requested within 30 days of receiving the coverage issue determination. OAH has rules that govern the conduct of their hearing proceedings.

Obtaining Medical Records

Arizona law (A.R.S. §12-2293) permits you to ask for a copy of your medical records. Your request must be in writing and must specify who you want to receive the records. The health care provider who has your records will provide you or the person you specified with a copy of your records.

Designated Decision-Maker: If you have a designated health care decision-maker, that person must send a written request for access to or copies of your medical records. The medical records must be provided to your health care decision-maker or a person designated in writing by your health care decision-maker unless you limit access to your medical records only to yourself or your health care decision-maker.

Confidentiality: Medical records disclosed under A.R.S. §12-2293 remain confidential. If you participate in the appeal process, the relevant portions of your medical records may be disclosed only to people authorized to participate in the review process for the medical condition under review. These people may not disclose your medical information to any other people.

Documentation for an Appeal

If you decide to file an appeal, you must give us any material justification or documentation for the appeal at the time the appeal is filed. If you gather new information during the course of your appeal, you should give it to us as soon as you get it. You must also give us the address and phone number where you can be contacted. If the appeal is already at Level 3, you should also send the information to the Department.

The Role of the Director of Insurance

Arizona law (A.R.S. §20-2533(F)) requires “any member who files a complaint with the Department relating to an adverse decision to pursue the review process prescribed” by law. This means, that for appealable decisions, you must pursue the health care appeals process before the Insurance Director can investigate a complaint you may have against our company based on the decision at issue in the appeal.

The appeal process requires the Director to:

1. Oversee the appeals process.
2. Maintain copies of each utilization review plan submitted by insurers.
3. Receive, process, and act on requests from an insurer for External, Independent Review.
4. Enforce the decisions of insurers.
5. Review decisions of insurers.
6. Report to the Legislature.
7. Send, when necessary, a record of the proceedings of an appeal to Superior Court or to the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH).
8. Issue a final administrative decision on coverage issues, including the notice of the right to request a hearing at OAH.

Receipt of Documents

Any written notice, acknowledgment, request, decision or other written document required to be mailed is deemed received by the person to whom the document is properly addressed on the fifth business day after being mailed. “Properly addressed” means your last known address.

You always have the right to contact the Department of Insurance

Arizona Department of Insurance and Financial Institutions
100 N 15th Avenue, Suite 261
Phoenix, AZ 85007-2630
(602) 364-2499 or
(800) 325-2548 (In Arizona but outside the Phoenix area)

**Quality Control
P.O. Box 82657
Lincoln, NE 68501-2657**

HEALTH CARE APPEAL REQUEST FORM

You may use this form to tell your insurer you want to appeal a denial decision.

Insured Member's Name _____ Member ID # _____
Name of representative pursuing appeal, if different from above _____
Mailing Address _____ Phone # _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Type of Denial: Denied Claim Denied Benefit for Service Not Yet Received

Name of Insurer that denied the claim/service: _____

If you are appealing your insurer's decision to deny a benefit for a service you have not yet received, will a 30 to 60 day delay in receiving the service likely cause a significant negative change in your health? If your answer is "Yes," you may be entitled to an expedited appeal. Your treating provider must sign and send a certification and documentation supporting the need for an expedited appeal.

What decision are you appealing? _____

(Explain what you want your insurer to pay for).

Explain why you believe the claim or service should be covered:

(Attach additional sheets of paper, if needed).

If you have questions about the appeals process or need help to prepare your appeal, you may call the Department of Insurance Consumer Assistance number (602) 364-2499 or 1-(800) 325-2548 (outside Metro Phoenix area), or Quality Control at 1-877-897-4328 (Toll-Free).

Make sure to attach everything that shows why you believe your insurer should cover your claim or authorize a service, including: Medical records Supporting documentation (letter from your doctor, brochures, notes, receipts, etc.) ** Also attach the certification from your treating provider if you are seeking expedited review

Signature of insured or authorized representative

Date

Quality Control
P.O. Box 82657
Lincoln, NE 68501-2657

**PROVIDER CERTIFICATION FORM
FOR EXPEDITED MEDICAL REVIEWS**

(You and your provider may use this form when requesting an expedited appeal.)

A patient who is denied authorization for a covered service is entitled to an expedited appeal if the treating provider certifies and provides supporting documentation that the time period for the standard appeal process (about 60 days) “is likely to cause a significant negative change in the [patient’s] medical condition at issue.”

PROVIDER INFORMATION

Treating Physician/Provider _____		
Phone # _____	Fax # _____	
Address _____		
City _____	State _____	Zip Code _____

PATIENT INFORMATION

Patient's Name _____		Member ID # _____
Phone # _____		
Address _____		
City _____	State _____	Zip Code _____

INSURER INFORMATION

Insurer Name _____		
Phone # _____	Fax # _____	
Address _____		
City _____	State _____	Zip Code _____

- Is the appeal for a service that the patient has already received? Yes No
If “Yes” the patient must pursue the standard appeals process and cannot use the expedited appeals process.
If “No”, continue with this form.
- What service denial is the patient appealing? _____
- Explain why you believe the patient needs the requested service and why the time for the standard appeal process will harm the patient. _____

Attach additional sheets if needed, and include: Medical records Supporting documentation

If you have questions about the appeals process or need help to prepare your appeal, you may call the Department of Insurance Consumer Assistance number (602) 364-2499 or 1-(800) 325-2548 (outside Metro Phoenix area), or Quality Control at 1-877-897-4328 (Toll-Free).

I certify, as the patient’s treating provider, that delaying the patient’s care for the time period needed for the informal reconsideration and formal appeal processes (about 60 days) is likely to cause a significant negative change in the patient’s medical condition at issue.

Provider’s Signature _____ Date _____