



Are you a MassHealth, Commonwealth Care or Health Safety Net Member or Applicant?

MassHealth

If so, you can now easily get details about your case or application right from your phone. Use this new self-service feature any time (24/7) to find...

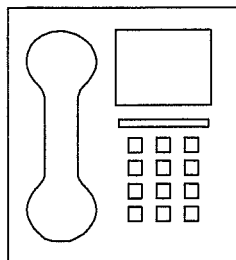
- Case status (approved, closed, etc.)
- Key eligibility dates (i.e., next review date)
- Plan information
- Items still needed to process your case
- Examples of acceptable verifications
- Address to send outstanding verifications and forms
- Description of notices or other items recently sent to you by MassHealth
- Ability to request a copy of a misplaced or lost form



Please note: This new feature is not yet available to those applying for or receiving Long Term Care services (for example, applicants seeking coverage for Long Term Care facilities or those currently living in such facilities). It is also not yet available to a small number of MassHealth members living in community settings.

Here's how it works:

- Simply call 1-888-665-9993 anytime, day or night, even on weekends!
(**Please note:** Service not available from Saturday, 10:00PM to Sunday, 6:00AM)
- Select your preferred language (English or Spanish)
- When you hear the option "If you are calling about a notice you received or to check on the status of your case, press 1", be sure to press "1."



- You will be led through a series of easy menus
- These menus allow you to hear the status of your case or application

Please note: New applications may not appear right away. If you cannot find the status of your application, you may want to wait and try again later.

Call 1-888-665-9993 for self-service, 24/7 telephone access to your case!

What You Can Do When MassHealth Denies Payment For Durable Medical Equipment

What is Durable Medical Equipment?

Durable medical equipment includes things like wheelchairs and other seating and mobility equipment, medical and surgical supplies, hospital beds, transfer devices and lifts.

Will MassHealth pay for durable medical equipment?

Yes, but in most cases, MassHealth has to approve the purchase ahead of time. This is called **prior approval**.

How do I request prior approval for durable medical equipment?

- The first step is to talk to your doctor about a prescription for the medical equipment.
- The second step is to find a medical equipment supplier willing to supply the equipment and to submit a prior approval request to MassHealth. The medical equipment supplier will evaluate you to see what specific piece of equipment you need, give a price for the item, try to get letters from your medical providers supporting your need for the item, and put that all together with your doctor's prescription for the item.
- Once the supplier gets all this information, the supplier will request prior approval from MassHealth.

What does MassHealth do to review the request?

After a medical supplier files a request for prior approval, MassHealth reviews the request. Usually MassHealth hires a consultant or expert to review the request. The two main questions MassHealth asks are:

- Is the item medically necessary to treat or improve a medical condition? and
- Is the item the least costly alternative, meaning are there less expensive ways to treat or improve the condition?

There are also more specific questions MassHealth might ask the medical supplier and your medical providers to address. There is more information about this in the MassHealth regulations at www.mass.gov/masshealth.

How will I know if I am approved or denied?

If MassHealth denies your request for prior approval, it will send a written notice to the medical supplier who made the request. **MassHealth must also send you a written denial notice and a form for filing an appeal.** The denial notice should give the reasons for the denial. It is a good idea to keep a copy of the denial notice.

Important Note: You should make sure that you keep MassHealth updated with your correct address so that you can receive timely notices.

How do I appeal if I am denied?

You have **30 days** to appeal if your request for prior approval is denied. The 30 days starts on the date you receive the denial notice. MassHealth assumes that you will receive the denial notice within 3 days from the date on the notice (the date it is mailed).

Your completed and signed appeal form must be **received** at the MassHealth Board of Hearings (BOH) within 30 days, so it is very important to pay attention to the calendar when you receive a MassHealth prior approval denial.

It is very important to keep a copy of your appeal request form for your records. If you fax the form, you should also keep a copy of the fax notification.

Will my services stop during the appeal?

If you have been receiving MassHealth covered services and MassHealth decides to deny or reduce what you have been receiving, you can request that you continue to receive the service while you are appealing. This is called “**aid pending appeal.**” But you have to act very fast. To receive “aid pending appeal” MassHealth must **receive** your appeal form within **10 days from the date on the notice.** Make sure that you write on the appeal form that you want to receive aid pending appeal. However, aid pending is not generally useful in durable medical equipment appeal cases, *e.g.*, you have an old wheelchair and need a new one.

Where do I send or fax my appeal form?

Division of Medical Assistance
Board of Hearings
2 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116

The fax number of the Board of Hearings is 617-210-5820.
The telephone number for the Board of Hearings is 617-210-5800.

What if I do not receive notice of the denial?

If you do not receive notice of the denial, you can still appeal. If, for example, your medical supplier tells you that the prior approval request was denied but you have not received a notice, contact the Board of Hearings right away, tell them what happened, and ask for an appeal form. If MassHealth does not act on a prior approval request or fails to send an appropriate notice, you have 120 days to appeal.

How will I know when my hearing is scheduled?

MassHealth will send you a written notice with the date, time and location of your hearing at least 10 days before the hearing. Hearings are usually held at the Board of Hearings office at 2 Boylston Street, Boston. If you can't get to Boston, you can ask to have the hearing at a different site, such as Springfield or Taunton. You can also have the hearing by telephone. To ask to have your hearing at a different site or by telephone, write a note at the bottom of the appeal form. You can also call the Board of Hearings about this.

Who do I bring to the hearing?

You can bring a lawyer, advocate, medical provider or friend to the hearing. You also have the right to have a witness at the hearing, either in person or by phone. This can be helpful if you have a doctor or other witness that can't be at the hearing in person. It is often very helpful to have your doctor, physical therapist, or other provider attend the hearing in person or by telephone.

How can I get ready for the hearing?

You should look at the reason for denial in your notice. It is also a good idea to review the hearing file before the hearing. MassHealth may call this file the "prior approval file." You can contact the Board of Hearings by fax or mail and ask for a copy of your hearing file (or "prior approval" file).

Looking at your file may help you figure out what to do to get ready for the hearing. For example, you may find that your doctor did not say enough about why you need the specific model or service. If so, ask your doctor for a new letter with more detailed information about why you need the item. You can send the new letter in ahead of time or bring it to the hearing.

Think about what you need to prove your case. What will help you show that the item you want MassHealth to pay for is: (1) medically necessary; and (2) the least expensive way to treat your medical condition? The fact that an item is expensive or unusual for your condition does not necessarily mean that

MassHealth will deny coverage. It does mean, however, that you may need to provide specific proof that only this specific item will work for you.

Some kinds of evidence that might help with your case:

- Letters from your doctors or other medical providers explaining why you need this equipment;
- Other witnesses to talk about why you need this equipment; or
- Information about the requested equipment.

What happens at the hearing?

MassHealth hearings are private and not open to the public, but they are tape recorded. A hearing officer runs the hearing and gives all witnesses an oath to tell the truth. The MassHealth consultant talks first about why MassHealth denied the request to pay for the equipment. The consultant will either be present at the hearing or on the phone.

After that, you and any witnesses you bring will have a chance to explain why the equipment is medically necessary for you. You can show the hearing officer any new doctor letter or other evidence you have. You can question the MassHealth consultant who reviewed your prior approval request.

If you want time after the hearing to get more evidence, ask the hearing officer for more time. The hearing officer will often approve an additional one - two weeks.

How will I find out about MassHealth's decision?

The hearing officer will review all the evidence and the testimony and make a decision. You will receive a copy of the written decision in the mail. The decision should be sent to you within 90 days of the date you asked for the hearing. But, it often takes much longer. Also, if you asked for a postponement or time after the hearing to provide more evidence, the time period for sending the hearing decision is lengthened.

The written decision will tell you whether the appeal was allowed or denied and the reasons for the decision. The written decision will also tell you that you have 30 days from the receipt of the decision to file an appeal in Superior Court if you do not agree with the decision.