



Guidelines for:

Neuropsychological Testing

Cognitive impairment is typically assessed through neuropsychological testing. It is used to determine an appropriate level of care and what residual functioning a patient has that would benefit from rehabilitation. Stroke, head injuries and dementia are some of the conditions that may dictate the need for this type of testing. This generally is a medical benefit but there are cases where mental health issues are also involved and the behavioral health benefit may apply.

Neuropsychological testing includes the use of specific tests that look at the cognitive and physical aspects of the patient. This type of testing looks at pinpointing the organic sources of a behavioral disorder while psychological testing addresses the personality component. For the behavioral health benefit, neuropsychological testing requests need to be considered when the specialist (psychologist, psychiatrist) identified for the given clinical presentation belongs to behavioral health. Neuropsychological testing that is ordered by a neurologist is covered by the member's medical benefit

A referral for neuropsychological testing should include:

1. Presenting problems.
2. Diagnostic questions to be answered.
3. A list of the tests that will be used to answer the diagnostic questions and the amount of time needed for each test. The tests chosen should be appropriate, reliable and valid for answering the diagnostic questions.
4. How treatment planning will be affected by the results.
5. If previous testing has been completed, have those results been obtained, reviewed, and utilized to determine what additional information is needed to answer the diagnostic questions.

The CPT code typically used for this type of testing is 96118.

Neuropsychological testing is to be conducted by a doctoral level, licensed psychologist who has specific training and experience in administering and interpreting standardized tests.

REQUIREMENTS FOR AUTHORIZATION

1. Tests requested must be reliable and valid for answering the diagnostic questions under consideration. The tests must be the most recent editions, be age-appropriate and meet the developmental and cultural requirements of the patient.
2. A mental health assessment must be completed by a behavioral health provider prior to testing.
3. A clear and specific rationale for testing must be provided. Additionally, it should address the impact on treatment planning.
4. A Neuropsychological Testing Authorization Request Form must be completed. The psychologist must complete the section that covers the tests to be given and the amount of time needed for each. The referring clinician can complete the sections that cover clinical information and the diagnostic questions to be answered.

MEDICAL NECESSITY

These three guidelines need to be met for testing to be authorized:

1. The tests selected must clearly provide answers to the diagnostic questions put forth by the referring clinician and clearly relate to the treatment of the patient.
2. The referral question cannot be answered by means of a diagnostic interview.
3. The test results will have a meaningful impact on treatment.

REASONS FOR NON-AUTHORIZATION

1. Testing primarily for educational or vocational purposes.
2. Testing for legal purposes.
3. Testing that exceeds established standards for administration time.
4. Routine entrance into a treatment program.