Important Information – Please Read Before Using This Policy

These services may or may not be covered by all Medica plans. Please refer to the member’s plan document for specific coverage information. If there is a difference between this general information and the member’s plan document, the member’s plan document will be used to determine coverage. With respect to Medicare and Minnesota Health Care Programs, this policy will apply unless those programs require different coverage. Members may contact Medica Customer Service at the phone number listed on their member identification card to discuss their benefits more specifically. Providers with questions about this Medica coverage policy may call the Medica Provider Service Center toll-free at 1-800-458-5512.

Medica coverage policies are not medical advice. Members should consult with appropriate health care providers to obtain needed medical advice, care and treatment.

Coverage Policy

The Health Research Institute/Pfeiffer Treatment Center protocols are investigative and therefore NOT COVERED.

Note: See also related Medica coverage policies: Chelation Therapy, Cytotoxic Testing for Allergy Diagnosis and Sublingual, Oral or Intranasal Allergenic Extracts for Allergy Diagnosis and/or Immunotherapy.

Note: This policy is no longer scheduled for routine review of the scientific literature.

Description

The Health Research Institute/Pfeiffer Treatment Center (HRI/PTC) is headquartered in Illinois. In addition, personnel currently offer outreach services in California, and Maryland. The center offers a protocol for the treatment of symptoms associated with attention, behavior, learning, mood, and thought disorders, including but not limited to autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit disorder, depression, anxiety and early Alzheimer’s disease. In addition HRI/PTC operates the HRI Pharmacy which provides patients with bottled supplements and compounded supplements prepared at the HRI Pharmacy.

The basic treatment protocol consists of treatment with supplements such as vitamins, minerals, and amino acids intended to alter chemical imbalance. Treatment is multi-phased: (1) an initial visit which includes medical & social history, physical examination, laboratory testing, and diet consultation, (2) consultation and initiation of a program purported to individualize treatment through dietary recommendations specific to the patient, (3) repeated follow-up visits where follow-up laboratory testing is performed, and (4) revision to the treatment protocol as deemed appropriate.

A fundamental tenet of the HRI/PTC assessment and treatment protocol is based on a theory that defective functioning of the protein, metallothionein (MT), causes metal metabolism disturbances that contribute to the manifestations observed in those disorders treated by the HRI/PTC. In particular, the HRI/PTC purports that a genetic defect in MT functioning couples with environmental factors to contribute to the pathology of autism spectrum disorder. In treating MT associated with autism spectrum disorder, additional diagnostic tests are often
performed which might include, but not be limited to, analysis of toxic and trace metals, serum plasmin, stool digestive components, and immune system function. Likewise, components to the treatment protocol are often added, including but not limited to gastrointestinal detoxification and heavy metal detoxification (e.g., chelation therapy).

FDA Approval
Treatment protocols are not regulated through the FDA approval process.

Prior Authorization
Prior authorization is not applicable. Claims for this service are subject to retrospective review and denial of coverage, as investigative services are not eligible for reimbursement.

Coding Considerations
Use the current applicable CPT/HCPCS code(s).

Original Effective Date: 11/1/2002
Re-Review Date(s): 11/15/2005
11/18/2008
11/21/2012
11/18/2015
2/21/2018