

CHAPTER 7
SECTION 3.2

PROGRAM FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PFPWD):
DURABLE EQUIPMENT

Issue Date: December 29, 1982

Authority: [32 CFR 199.5\(a\)\(6\)](#), and [\(c\)\(2\)](#)

I. POLICY

Durable equipment is covered when the item of equipment is necessary in the treatment, habilitation, or rehabilitation of a disabled beneficiary.

II. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

In order to qualify as durable equipment, the item will be evaluated against the following criteria:

A. It must be clearly related to and necessary for the habilitation, treatment, or training of beneficiaries with the given disability.

B. It must improve the function of a malformed body member or retard further deterioration of the disabled beneficiary's physical condition.

C. It cannot be useful to anyone in the absence of a physical or mental disability.

D. It must be primarily and customarily used to serve a medical or habilitative purpose rather than primarily for transportation, comfort or convenience.

NOTE: A wheelchair (or program-approved alternative) is not considered transportation in the sense of the above criteria. It is qualified as durable equipment under the second criteria above because by providing basic mobility, it retards further deterioration of the patient's physical condition. Mobility beyond that basic mobility provided by a wheelchair (or a program-approved alternative) is considered to be primarily transportation.

E. It cannot be beyond the appropriate level of performance and quality required under the circumstances (i.e., non-luxury, non-deluxe). However, this criteria is not intended to preclude special fitting of equipment to accommodate a particular disability (such as fitting a wheelchair for a one-armed individual.)

F. It is not available for loan from a local Uniformed Services medical treatment facility.

G. Durable equipment under the Program for Persons with Disabilities (formerly known as Program for the Handicapped) may be purchased or rented. However, because of the

ordinarily long term need for the equipment under the PFPWD, claims for rentals must be reviewed for cost effectiveness.

H. Only one similar item of durable equipment will be purchased during any one period of time. Benefits include repair of durable equipment purchased under the PFPWD and its subsequent replacement if it is determined that the previous item is no longer usable.

I. A physician must certify that the item of equipment is necessary in the treatment, habilitation, or rehabilitation of the PFPWD beneficiary.

J. There must be written authorization by the contractor. Such authorization is specific as to the item of durable equipment being approved. Further, such authorization is only valid for a period not to exceed six consecutive months from the date issued. If the item of durable equipment is not purchased within the time limit, a new authorization is required. See also the [Chapter 11, Section 9.1](#) and [Section 9.3](#).

K. Benefits may also be extended for the reasonable charges for repair and replacement parts (such as batteries), including adjustment, of durable equipment purchased under the PFPWD. Such repair or part replacement or adjustment does not require authorization unless the charge is fifty dollars (\$50.00) or more. In the case of an emergency, a charge above that amount may be considered without authorization, subject to special review.

L. Durable equipment will normally be cost-shared in the month that the purchase is made. However, the sponsor has the option, only at the time of the request for authorization of equipment, of prorating the allowed amount, determined as follows:

1. the number of months calculated by dividing the allowable cost for the item by \$1,000 and doubling the resulting quotient;

EXAMPLE: For an item with allowable amount of \$5,000, the maximum prorated period is 10 months (i.e., $5000 \div 1000 = 5 \times 2 = 10$).

2. the number of months of useful equipment life for the beneficiary, as determined by the contractor.

When the allowable amount is prorated over several months, interest and carrying charges as well as delivery and service charges are allowable under the same conditions set forth in the [Chapter 13, Section 3.2](#). In no case shall payments be made beyond termination of eligibility as a TRICARE beneficiary.

III. EXCEPTIONS

Durable equipment required by an institutionalized disabled beneficiary must be provided by the institution as a part of the management plan and included in the monthly institutional charges. Only under extremely unusual situations (which would require individual review and consideration), could durable equipment be covered for an institutionalized beneficiary.

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