

American Medical Association definition of medical necessity

The AMA defines medical necessity as: “Health care services or products that a prudent physician would provide to a patient for the purpose of preventing, diagnosing or treating an illness, injury, disease or its symptoms in a manner that is:

- (a) in accordance with generally accepted standards of medical practice;
- (b) clinically appropriate in terms of type, frequency, extent, site, and duration; and
- (c) not primarily for the economic benefit of the health plans and purchasers or for the convenience of the patient, treating physician, or other health care provider.

The “prudent physician” standard of medical necessity ensures that physicians are able to use their expertise and exercise discretion, consistent with good medical care, in determining the medical necessity for care to be provided each individual patient.