MEDICARE COVERAGE GUIDELINES
MANUAL WHEELCHAIRS

Medicare requires a face-to-face exam with the ordering physician. The patient's chart notes must include a detailed narrative describing the patient's mobility limitations and justifying the need for a wheelchair.

Types of Manual Wheelchairs

- Standard Wheelchair: Designed for short-term or limited use. For patients with full UE strength and function or a full-time caregiver. Weighs >36 lbs.
- Lightweight Wheelchair: Designed for short-term or limited use. For patients with limited UE strength and function or a full-time caregiver with limited UE strength. Weighs 34-36 lbs.
- High-Strength Lightweight Wheelchair: Designed for long-term use. Durable and customizable for ideal fit/rehab seating. Weighs <34 lbs.
- Ultra-lightweight Wheelchair: For full-time wheelchair users. Weighs <30 lbs. Adjustable rear axle position. Requires wheelchair evaluation from PT/OT/physician with specific rehab training.

Chart notes must address the following information:

- Patient's diagnosis and mobility limitations
- Why patient cannot safely or sufficiently use a cane or walker
- How the use of a wheelchair will improve patient's ability to participate in MRADLs (include specific MRADLs – i.e., bathing, toileting, meal preparation, dining)
- Patient's upper extremity function – Can the patient self-propel a wheelchair? If not, is a caregiver available to assist?

FOR LONG-TERM WHEELCHAIR USAGE:

- Patient self-propels wheelchair while engaging in frequent activities that cannot be performed in a standard weight (>36 lbs.) or lightweight (34-36 lbs.) wheelchair
- Hours per day the patient spends in the wheelchair

Additional Questions to Consider:

- Distance the patient can walk unassisted
- Gait/balance problems/risk of falls
- Limitations of strength, endurance, range of motion, and coordination
- Presence of pain, deformity or absence of an upper or lower extremity
- Patient's home environment
- Special requirements: Unique width, depth or height? Rehab seating? Roho cushion? Leg rests?

OWARD'S MEDICAL SUPPLY

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