



MN008-T2059900  
Bren Road East  
Minnetonka, MN 55343

October 4, 2021

Raman Malhotra, MD, AASM President  
American Academy of Sleep Medicine  
2510 N. Frontage Rd.  
Darien, IL 60561

**Re: Your inquiry about the UnitedHealthcare coverage policy for oral appliances for obstructive sleep apnea**

Dear Dr. Malhotra,

Thank you for contacting us about the UnitedHealthcare® Obstructive Sleep Apnea Treatment Medical Policy, version 2021T0525DD, which includes our coverage guidelines of oral appliances for obstructive sleep apnea.

In your email and letter, dated Sept. 17, 2021, you shared information around the concerns of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) in regard to the policy requirements of the face-to-face encounter with the prescribing physician and the prescription from the physician including the oral appliance make, model and price, and rationale for the selection of specific devices and accessories.

We appreciate your insights and want to give you some background information.

**How we determine coverage**

Benefits for members are determined by the provisions of their specific health plan. The guiding standards are the safety and efficacy of the covered health care services. When we make a coverage decision, we reference the member's specific benefit plan document and UnitedHealthcare medical policy. Medical policy coverage decisions are based on scientifically proven clinical evidence.

In general, UnitedHealthcare defines "unproven services" as those determined to be ineffective for the treatment of the medical condition or not to have beneficial effect on the health outcomes due to insufficient and inadequate clinical evidence from well-conducted randomized controlled trials or cohort studies in prevailing published peer-reviewed medical literature. These are defined as follows:

- **Well-conducted randomized controlled trials** – Two or more treatments are compared to each other, and the patient is not allowed to choose which treatment is received
- **Well-conducted cohort studies from more than one institution** – Patients who receive study treatment are compared to a group of patients who receive standard therapy. The comparison group must be nearly identical to the study treatment group.

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### **Coverage for oral appliances for obstructive sleep apnea**

UnitedHealthcare coverage of oral appliances for obstructive sleep apnea is currently under review. Once the review is completed, if any revisions are necessary, we will update our policy. You can find our most current medical policies at [UHCprovider.com/policies](https://www.uhcprovider.com/policies).

### **Medical policy development**

Clinicians with subject matter expertise help us develop our medical policies, as do materials and insights we receive from clinical experts. We review each submission with great care and consideration because they contribute to the overall quality and integrity of our medical policy review and development process.

In some cases, we may ask external parties with specific and relevant clinical expertise for input on our medical policy process, but this isn't required. To preserve the integrity of our process, our subject matter experts and committee members must have the discretion to carefully weigh the need for such engagement on a case-by-case basis. If we determine that such engagement is appropriate, we'll reach out to you for further comment or discussion.

### **We welcome your feedback**

We'll continue to review published clinical evidence about the use of oral appliances for obstructive sleep apnea and reassess our position as the evidence and guidance evolves. If additional published, peer-reviewed clinical evidence that you haven't previously submitted becomes available and you'd like to share it with us, please send it to [medical\\_policy\\_inquiries@uhc.com](mailto:medical_policy_inquiries@uhc.com). Thank you.

Sincerely,



Wendy MacLeod, MD  
National Medical Director

**United  
Healthcare**

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