

VHA PROSTHETIC CLINICAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (PCMP) CLINICAL PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRESCRIPTION OF ORTHOTIC DEVICES

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the clinical practice recommendations is to assist practitioners in clinical decision-making, to standardize and improve the quality of patient care, and to promote cost-effective prescribing.

II. BACKGROUND

VHA's Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service Strategic Healthcare Group was directed by the Under Secretary for Health to establish a Prosthetic Clinical Management Program (PCMP). The objectives are to coordinate the development of clinical practice recommendations for prosthetic prescription practices and contracting opportunities to assure technology uniformity and ease of access to prosthetic prescriptions and patient care that will lead to valid outcome measures and analysis for research purposes.

A work group with input from selected clinicians convened to recommend a policy regarding selection of orthotic devices.

Orthotic devices are clinically important items used by veterans with neurologic, orthopedic and other musculoskeletal disorders. There is a wide range of possible orthotic devices. This document does not address foot orthotics.

III. CLINICAL PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS/MEDICAL CRITERIA

A. In order for VA to provide a veteran with an orthotic device, the following criteria must apply:

1. *Clinical Indications*

- There is documented musculoskeletal or neurological condition in the medical record, which supports the use of an orthotic device.
- The veteran (with or without the assistance of a caregiver) must be willing and able to wear and care for the orthotic device properly.
- A VA prescription is received from a competent/credentialed clinician requesting a specific orthotic device or requesting that a patient be evaluated by a competent/credentialed clinician for an orthotic

device.

- Each VA site must have a policy in place clearly delegating the competency/credentials of staff ordering and issuing an orthotic device.

2. Clinical Contraindications

- Veterans or their caregivers who are unwilling or unable to wear or care for the orthotic device properly.
- Maintenance/replacement of the device will be dependent upon reassessment during follow-up appointments or sooner if the patient is having a problem with the device or feels that he/she is not willing to use the device.

3. Patient Participation

- The veteran has been trained in the proper fit, use and care of the orthotic device.
- Proper follow-up care is provided by the clinic/clinic team.
- The veteran and/or caregiver must understand why the veteran is being given the orthotic device.
- The veteran (with or without the assistance of a caregiver) must be willing and able to wear and care for the orthotic device properly.

4. Special Consideration should be given to:

- Veterans whose condition is likely to change i.e., those with stroke or progressive neuromuscular conditions, thereby necessitating frequent re-evaluation, including those with a new stroke or fracture.
- Veterans with dementia or other conditions who require an orthotic device yet must rely on a caregiver for the use and care of the orthotic device.

5. Prior to receiving an Orthotic Device:

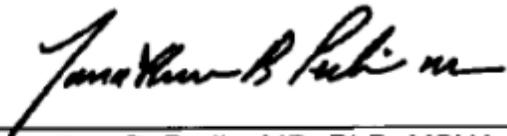
- The veteran will be evaluated for and fit with the appropriately sized orthotic device. The patient's physical condition (skin integrity, limb girth, general sensation and function) will be documented at the time of evaluation.

- The veteran and/or caregiver will receive instruction from a qualified clinician on the proper fit, function, and care of the orthotic device. These instructions and the patient's understanding of these instructions will be documented.

IV. REFERENCES

1. Bertram Goldberg and John d. Hsu, editors. Atlas of Orthoses and Assistive Devices. Mosby, 1997.
2. Deborah A. Nawoczenski and Marcia E. Epler. Orthotics in Functional Rehabilitation of the Lower Limb. WB Saunders Co. 1997.
3. Kristjan T. Ragnarsson. Lower Extremity Orthotics, Shoes and Gait Aids. Rehabilitation Medicine Principles and Practice. 3rd Edition. Kippincott-Raven Publishers. 1998.
4. Steven C. Kirshblum et al. Spinal and Upper Extremity Orthotics Rehabilitation Medicine Principles and Practice. 3rd Edition. Lippincott-Raven Publishers. 1998.

APPROVED/DISAPPROVED:



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