

**Addressing Social Determinants of Health**

*Patient Support Through Meals After an Inpatient Hospital Stay, Respite Care and Over-the-Counter Items*

It is widely acknowledged that social determinants of health drive medical utilization, health care costs and health outcomes. In fact, research attributes as much as 40% of health outcomes—and up to one-third of deaths—in the U.S. to social factors.

**Impact for Health Care Systems**

Social determinants of health can supplement clinical data and offer greater insight into an individual’s risk level, as well as support accurate health care risk prediction and care plan development. Social determinants of health include socio-economic factors such as physical environment, economic stability, community and social context, education, nutrition, and health care accessibility. When available, review these as part of a patient’s evaluation and care coordination.

Social factors also impact several HEDIS and CMS star program measures, including:

- Improving or maintaining physical health
- Controlling high blood pressure
- Plan all-cause readmissions
- Hospitalization for potentially preventable complications
- Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems survey responses

**Local Challenges**

In a 2018 United Health Foundation study ranking states by the health of their senior populations, Louisiana ranked last (50th) with high rates of food insecurity, senior poverty, and frequent mental distress in adults ages 65 and older. These social stressors can result in increased risks for chronic conditions, longer hospital stays, higher readmission rates, greater utilization of long-term care and rehabilitation services, and increased mortality rates. Peoples Health is beginning to address these challenges by offering the following new benefits.

**Meals After an Inpatient Hospital Stay**

Post-discharge meals are covered as follows for Peoples Health patients discharged to their home or another household in Louisiana from an inpatient hospital, inpatient rehabilitation facility or long-term acute care facility.

Plans That Offer the Benefit	Meals Per Day	Number of Days	Meal Types
Peoples Health Choices 65 #14 (HMO)	Two	Five	Breakfast and one meal for lunch or dinner
Peoples Health Choices 65 #14 (HMO) for Northshore			
Peoples Health Choices Gold (HMO-POS)			
Peoples Health Secure Health (HMO SNP)	Three	Seven	Breakfast, lunch and dinner
Peoples Health Secure Choice #011 (HMO SNP)			

Meals are **not** covered for patients discharged to another health care location or from an inpatient mental health stay, a skilled nursing facility stay or an observation stay.

Peoples Health staff places meal orders and may request assistance from facility staff to collect information on dietary orders (e.g., heart-healthy meals, gluten-free meals, puréed meals, etc.), food allergies, the address for meal delivery, and a post-discharge contact phone number for the patient or the patient’s caregiver.

Meals are prepared by the Peoples Health network meal provider and distributed as a single delivery. Orders placed before 3 p.m. on the day of discharge are delivered the following day. Orders placed after 3 p.m. on the day of discharge are delivered two days later. Meals are frozen to ensure freshness.

## Respite Care

Respite care sessions are available to Peoples Health patients diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease or dementia. To be eligible, patients must meet plan rules for documenting the condition, such as in the form of claim information. When evaluating your Peoples Health patients, please code to the highest level of specificity, complexity and accuracy possible, as well as document and code active diagnoses annually. Peoples Health may contact you to request additional information to confirm the patient’s diagnosis.

Plans That Offer the Benefit	Number of Sessions Per Year	Availability
Peoples Health Choices 65 #14	12 (up to four hours each)	From 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays
Peoples Health Choices 65 #14 for Northshore		
Peoples Health Choices Gold		
Peoples Health Secure Health		

Sessions less than four hours count as one session. Two sessions may be scheduled in a day if the provider has availability. Sessions must be scheduled at least three full business days in advance.

Another person may request services on the patient’s behalf if Peoples Health has a power of attorney form on file naming the person as the agent or if the patient gives Peoples Health verbal consent to speak to the person about the services. Services vary depending on patient needs and may include:

- Companionship and safety
- Light housekeeping
- Assistance with meal preparation
- Bathing assistance
- Mobility and transfer assistance
- Assistance with grooming, dressing and toileting needs
- Incontinence care
- Medication reminders
- Stand-by assistance for personal services

Prior to the initial respite care visit, Peoples Health staff determines patient eligibility and the respite care provider conducts a pre-session home visit. The provider identifies the level of care needed and accepts or denies the patient for services. If accepted, the patient or caregiver is instructed to contact the provider directly to schedule or cancel appointments. If the patient is not accepted, the provider notifies the patient, as well as notifies Peoples Health medical management, which then finds an alternate provider to administer services.

## Over-the-Counter Items

Certain health-related items and nonprescription medications are covered, including vitamins and minerals, as well as products for allergies, colds, digestive health, eye care, first aid, incontinence, oral care, pain relief, personal care and foot care. Items must be purchased from the network mail-order provider, OTC Health Solutions, to be covered. Covered items may change during the year.

Plans That Offer the Benefit	Maximum Amount Each Quarter
Peoples Health Choices 65 #14	\$100
Peoples Health Choices 65 #14 for Northshore	
Peoples Health Choices Gold	
Peoples Health Secure Health	\$200

Unused amounts in a quarter do not carry over to the next quarter.

An online catalog of covered items is available at [www.peopleshealth.com/otc](http://www.peopleshealth.com/otc). Printed copies are available through Peoples Health member services. Patients order items by visiting <http://peopleshealth.otchs.com> and creating an online account or by calling 1-888-628-2770, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. TTY users may call 1-877-672-2688.

Patients may order up to 15 of each item per order, with the exception of blood pressure monitors, which are limited to one of each type per year. Items are delivered within seven to 10 business days. Damaged or malfunctioning items can be returned to OTC Health Solutions within 30 days of receipt for an identical replacement item.

**For Further Assistance:** The Peoples Health care team, which includes various clinical staff, is available to help patients identify and access appropriate community and social resources, as well as to support providers in coordinating patient services. Contact your provider relations representative with any questions or to refer your Peoples Health patients for care team intervention.