



REIMBURSEMENT POLICY STATEMENT

Georgia Medicaid

Policy Name & Number	Date Effective
Influenza Testing-GA MCD-PY-1543	04/01/2026
Policy Type	
REIMBURSEMENT	

Reimbursement Policies prepared by CareSource and its affiliates are intended to provide a general reference regarding billing, coding and documentation guidelines. Coding methodology, regulatory requirements, industry-standard claims editing logic, benefits design and other factors are considered in developing Reimbursement Policies.

In addition to this Policy, Reimbursement of services is subject to member benefits and eligibility on the date of service, medical necessity, adherence to plan policies and procedures, claims editing logic, provider contractual agreement, and applicable referral, authorization, notification and utilization management guidelines. Medically necessary services include, but are not limited to, those health care services or supplies that are proper and necessary for the diagnosis or treatment of disease, illness, or injury and without which the patient can be expected to suffer prolonged, increased or new morbidity, impairment of function, dysfunction of a body organ or part, or significant pain and discomfort. These services meet the standards of good medical practice in the local area, are the lowest cost alternative, and are not provided mainly for the convenience of the member or provider. Medically necessary services also include those services defined in any federal or state coverage mandate, Evidence of Coverage documents, Medical Policy Statements, Provider Manuals, Member Handbooks, and/or other policies and procedures.

This Policy does not ensure an authorization or Reimbursement of services. Please refer to the plan contract (often referred to as the Evidence of Coverage) for the service(s) referenced herein. If there is a conflict between this Policy and the plan contract (i.e., Evidence of Coverage), then the plan contract (i.e., Evidence of Coverage) will be the controlling document used to make the determination. CareSource and its affiliates may use reasonable discretion in interpreting and applying this Policy to services provided in a particular case and may modify this Policy at any time.

According to the rules of Mental Health Parity Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA), coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of a behavioral health disorder will not be subject to any limitations that are less favorable than the limitations that apply to medical conditions as covered under this policy.

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A. Subject

Influenza Testing

B. Background

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. Rapid influenza diagnostic tests (RIDTs) are immunoassays that identify the presence of influenza viral nucleoprotein antigens in respiratory specimens and display the result in a qualitative way (positive vs. negative). The best way to reduce the risk of flu and potentially serious complications is by getting vaccinated each year.

Having clinical signs and symptoms consistent with influenza increases the reliability of a positive RIDT result. A positive result is most likely a true positive result if the respiratory specimen was collected within 3-4 days of illness during periods of high influenza activity (eg, winter). A negative result of RIDTs do not exclude influenza virus infection, and influenza should still be considered if clinical suspicion is high based on history, signs, symptoms and clinical examination.

C. Definitions

- **Influenza (Flu) Season** – The time during which influenza spikes in the population, typically starting in October and peaking between December and February, although significant activity can last as late as May.
- **Rapid Influenza Diagnostic Tests (RIDTs)** – Testing that detects the parts of the virus (antigens) that stimulate an immune response, providing results within approximately 10-15 minutes.

D. Policy

- I. CareSource considers conventional testing, such as RIDTs, as lowest cost and should be utilized before any further testing or higher cost tests are performed.
- II. Influenza can cause mild to severe illness and, at times, can lead to death. Flu symptoms usually come on suddenly. Patients who have flu often feel some or all of these signs and symptoms:
 - fever of 100.4 or higher
 - feeling feverish/chills
 - cough
 - sore throat
 - runny or stuffy nose
 - muscle or body aches
 - headaches
 - fatigue (tiredness)
 - vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children)

The REIMBURSEMENT Policy Statement detailed above has received due consideration as defined in the REIMBURSEMENT Policy Statement Policy and is approved.

III. The RIDT CPT code must be billed first when testing for influenza: 87804 - Infectious agent antigen detection by immunoassay with direct optical observation; influenza

VI. If conventional testing is

- A. Positive – no further testing is medically necessary.
- B. Negative – if the member’s presenting symptoms support the diagnosis, then molecular diagnostic test (MDT) may be medically necessary to confirm the diagnosis.

V. CareSource may request documentation to support medical necessity.

- A. Only 1 test per member per day is reimbursable.
- B. If both RIDT and MDT tests are performed, only the MDT test will be reimbursed if medical necessary.
- C. Duplicate tests will not be reimbursed.

VI. Documentation must support medical necessity, and testing during or outside of the defined influenza season may result in recoupment if documentation does not support medical necessity.

E. Conditions of Coverage

NA

F. Related Policies/Rules

NA

G. Review/Revision History

DATE		ACTION
Date Issued	09/25/2024	New policy
Date Revised	03/12/2025	Revision. Removed flu season timeframe. VII. Clarified duplicate testing. Added documentation language and updated references. Approved at Committee.
	12/17/2025	Revision. Revised D. VII. for clarification and updated references. Approved at Committee.
Date Effective	04/01/2026	
Date Archived		

H. References

1. Diagnosis for flu. Centers for Disease Control. October 3, 2022. Accessed November 17, 2025. www.cdc.gov
2. Flu season. Centers for Disease Control. Updated September 26, 2025. Accessed November 17, 2025. www.cdc.gov
3. Rapid influenza diagnostic tests. Centers for Disease Control. Updated September 17, 2024. Accessed November 17, 2025. www.cdc.gov

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