Medical Policy
Sensory Stimulation for Coma Patients

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Policy Number: 658
BCBSA Reference Number: 2.01.24A

Related Policies
None

Policy
Commercial Members: Managed Care (HMO and POS), PPO, and Indemnity
Medicare HMO Blue SM and Medicare PPO Blue SM Members
Sensory stimulation for coma patients is INVESTIGATIONAL.

Prior Authorization Information
Commercial Members: Managed Care (HMO and POS)
This is NOT a covered service.

Commercial Members: PPO, and Indemnity
This is NOT a covered service.

Medicare Members: HMO Blue SM
This is NOT a covered service.

Medicare Members: PPO Blue SM
This is NOT a covered service.

CPT Codes / HCPCS Codes / ICD-9 Codes
The following codes are included below for informational purposes. Inclusion or exclusion of a code does not constitute or imply member coverage or provider reimbursement. Please refer to the member’s contract benefits in effect at the time of service to determine coverage or non-coverage as it applies to an individual member.

Providers should report all services using the most up-to-date industry-standard procedure, revenue, and diagnosis codes, including modifiers where applicable.
CPT Codes
There is no specific CPT code for this service.

HCPCS Codes
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<th>HCPCS codes:</th>
<th>Code Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>S9056</td>
<td>Coma stimulation, per diem</td>
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Description
Sensory stimulation is intended to promote awakening and enhance the rehabilitative potential of coma patients. Protocols may involve stimulation of any or all of the following senses: visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, cutaneous, and kinesthetic. Various stimuli may be used for each sense. Protocols may differ with respect to who performs the stimulation and where. Professionals include nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech-language therapists. In some cases, family members may be trained in the techniques and are given primary responsibility for providing the therapy. Treatment may be delivered in the hospital, the patient's home, or a nursing home.

Summary
A review of the peer-reviewed literature on MEDLINE for sensory stimulation for coma found no controlled clinical trials. Additionally, a Cochrane systematic review concluded that there is no reliable evidence to demonstrate that sensory stimulation in coma patients is effective. Recovery from prolonged vegetative or minimally conscious states can be a slow and variable process that is influenced by a number of factors. High quality studies that control for these factors and use objective markers of recovery are lacking. Therefore, evidence is insufficient to evaluate the efficacy of this treatment and it is considered investigational.

Policy History
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Information Pertaining to All Blue Cross Blue Shield Medical Policies
Click on any of the following terms to access the relevant information:

Medical Policy Terms of Use
Managed Care Guidelines
Indemnity/PPO Guidelines
Clinical Exception Process
Medical Technology Assessment Guidelines

References
1. TEC Assessment, 1989, p 269-77.