**Policy:** Independent Care Health Plan (*i*Care) contracts with individual and group providers of health care products and services for Medicare and Medicaid recipients. Each line of business functions under its own contract guidelines for which benefit, and reimbursement requirements vary. Specific contract benefits, guidelines, and/or policies supersede information outlined in this policy.

Independent Care is dedicated to enriching the quality of clinical care provided to our members by our staff and contracted providers. Clinical Practice Guidelines support providers in treating chronic disease, providing preventative care, and facilitating provider-member interactions.

All Clinical Practice Guidelines recommended by *i*Care are based on national medical association and health organization recommendations. Information provided in this policy applies to all providers of care to *i*Care members and is reviewed annually and updated no less than every two years, or as national guidelines change. Updates to the Clinical Practice Guidelines in policy form are reviewed by the Credentials Review Committee at the quarterly meeting immediately preceding any policy revision.

**PROCESS:**

A Clinical Practice Guideline (CPG) is created by national medical associations and/or health organizations for the explicit purpose of disseminating peer-reviewed, evidence-based practice recommendations to enhance the quality and consistency of care delivered to all patients, regardless of payor source. The CPGs guide decisions and provide criteria regarding diagnosis, management, and treatment in specific areas of healthcare based on published evidenced-based medical literature. The CPGs reflect current evidence in the literature for large groups of individuals with specific health diagnoses; The licensed and boarded practitioner is encouraged to practice patient-centered care, developing care plans with each individual patient’s needs and conditions in mind, utilizing medical justifications for exceptions when deviating from the CPGs, based on the provider’s expertise and clinical judgment.

 For ease of access, *i*Care’s Clinical Practice Guidelines policy (GA-005) is posted on *i*Care’s Provider Website. The Clinical Practice Guidelines adopted by *i*Care are reviewed and updated on an annual basis, at a minimum, by *i*Care’s Chief Medical Officer based on current evidence and literature review. Besides being posted to the Provider Website, *i*Care’s Clinical Practice Guidelines are further disseminated to contracted providers in multiple formats annually: via electronic-based provider newsletters, email communications, new provider training materials and in various printed formats at *i*Care’s discretion. *i*Care Staff also have access to the Clinical Practice Guidelines on both the external Provider Website and internal Staff website for use with members and providers. Independent Care staff receive initial training on Clinical Practice Guidelines during new hire orientation, as well as ongoing training to all staff via multiple venues annually. Additionally, providers who receive *i*Care training with our Provider Educator also receive information regarding *i*Care’s expectation that providers follow CPGs, as well as where to access the policy and disease-specific guidelines on the *i*Care website; and providers also give signed attestation they will conform to *i*Care’s policies, as posted on *i*Care’s provider website, as part of the contracting process.

*i*Care Health Plan periodically monitors compliance with nationally recognized clinical practice guidelines.

\**i*Care publishes medical guidelines from several well-respected national sources. These guidelines may have some differences in recommendations. Information contained in the guidelines is not a substitute for a physician’s or other healthcare professional's clinical judgment and is not always applicable to an individual. Therefore, the physician or healthcare professional and patient should work in partnership in the decision-making process regarding the patient's treatment. Furthermore, using this information will not guarantee a specific outcome for each patient. None of the information in the guidelines is intended to interfere with or prohibit clinical decisions made by a treating physician or other healthcare professional regarding medically available treatment options for patients.

Publication of these guidelines is not a promise or guarantee of coverage. Individuals should review their coverage to determine benefits.

**Responsible Department: General & Administration**

**Responsible Party: Medical Director**

**Reviewing Department(s): General & Administration**

**References: As listed above**

**Recommended Distribution:** All staff via Independent Care’s SharePoint Site

**Approvals:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Approved By: Mary Ellen Benzik** | **Chief Medical Officer**  | **Date: 1/26/2021 9:30 AM** |
| **Comments: ⠀** |
| **Approved By: Tony Mollica**  | **President & CEO** | **Date: 1/26/2021 11:14 AM** |
| **Comments: ⠀** |