



Florida  
Developmental  
Disabilities  
Council, Inc.

## How to Get a Customized Wheelchair through Florida Medicaid

*“To advocate and promote meaningful participation in all aspects of life for Floridians with developmental disabilities”*

### What is a customized wheelchair?

A customized wheelchair cannot be directly purchased from the manufacturer. A customized wheelchair is a wheelchair that has been made just for you so that it is comfortable for you, helps you stay healthy, and allows you to do the things that you need to do. It can be either manual or powered. Manual means that you or someone else has to move the wheelchair by rolling it, by turning the wheelchair wheels, or by pushing it. A power wheelchair uses batteries to power it and it moves by the person pushing a lever.

### Where do I get a customized wheelchair?

A customized wheelchair is made by a Durable Medical Equipment (DME) company. DME companies will be able to help you get your customized wheelchair through Florida Medicaid or Medicare, depending on what program you receive services from.

### Will Florida Medicaid pay for a customized wheelchair?

Yes, Florida Medicaid will pay for a customized wheelchair. Even if you are on the iBudget Waiver you will need to get your wheelchair through the regular Florida Medicaid program. “Regular Medicaid” means the Florida Medicaid State Plan services that all Florida Medicaid recipients get even if they are on a Waiver like the iBudget Waiver. This means that the cost of your wheelchair will not be counted in your iBudget cost plan. Even though the iBudget Waiver is not paying for your wheelchair, your Support Coordinator can still help you with the steps for getting your wheelchair.

Florida Medicaid has rules about when they will pay for a customized wheelchair. These rules are listed below:

- You have to plan to use the wheelchair in your own home and community. You also can be living in a group home or an assisted living facility.
- If you are under 18 and live in a nursing home, you can get a wheelchair through Florida Medicaid.
- If you are 18 or older and live in a nursing home or live in an intermediate care facility, you will have to ask the home or facility to help you get a wheelchair.
- Florida Medicaid will only pay for a new customized wheelchair once every five years and if you need it. If your wheelchair is still meeting your needs or can be fixed, Florida Medicaid will not provide a new wheelchair.
- Florida Medicaid will not pay for a wheelchair or custom upgrade unless you or your family member must have the wheelchair to do daily living activities such as bathing, eating, using the bathroom, dressing, transferring in and out of bed or a chair, or moving about within your home.

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. (FDDC) is a 501(c)(3) state-wide not for profit organization federally mandated to improve the lives of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Established in 1971, FDDC has positively impacted programs and policies throughout state and local governments resulting in sustainable services for thousands of Floridians.

## How to get started

### Medical Necessity and Prior Authorization

You have to show Florida Medicaid that you need a customized wheelchair. You must show that you are not mobile without the customized wheelchair. Florida Medicaid calls this having Medical Necessity. It simply means that you must have a customized wheelchair to do the things that are necessary for your daily life, to stay healthy, to take care of yourself, and help others to help you. To be sure that you need a customized wheelchair, Florida Medicaid will prior authorize (approve) your wheelchair. This means that you have to go through several steps to get the paperwork necessary for prior approval.

#### Step 1 - You must get a prescription from a doctor

A doctor must tell Florida Medicaid that you need a special or customized wheelchair. You will have to make an appointment with a doctor and the doctor can write a prescription for a wheelchair after they examine you. A Physician's Assistant (PA) or Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP), can also write the prescription.

The prescription is a piece of paper that you will use to show you need a customized wheelchair. For wheelchairs, this prescription is called a Certificate of Medical Necessity. This form must be signed and dated by the physician, PA, or ARNP. You also will need a prescription for a wheelchair evaluation. More information about wheelchair evaluations is given in Step 3.

What to do with my doctor's office:

| What I Must Do   | What the Doctor Must Do  |
|--|--|
| Make an appointment with a doctor.                               | Examine you  |
| Tell them that I need their help to get a customized wheelchair. | Tell you whether or not you need a customized wheelchair.                                      |
| Get the needed paperwork.  | Write a prescription on a form called a Certificate of Medical Necessity and sign and date it. |
|  | Write a prescription for a wheelchair evaluation.  |

#### Step 2 - You must talk to a Durable Medical Equipment (DME) company

Next, you must talk to a DME company. Your doctor or Support Coordinator can tell you where there is a DME company in your area. You must go to the company and talk to them about what needs to happen next for you to get a customized wheelchair.

### Step 3 - You must get your wheelchair evaluation with a physical or occupational therapist or a physiatrist

The therapist or physiatrist will examine you and complete the paperwork that is required for you to get prior approval for your wheelchair. You must give them the prescription that you got from your doctor for the wheelchair evaluation. The therapist or physiatrist will do the following things:

- Describe your physical condition and why you need a customized wheelchair.
- If you are getting a power wheelchair, the evaluation must say that you are able to use the chair safely.
- Describe all the extra things that your wheelchair will need for you to be comfortable and healthy and allow you to do all the things you need to do.
- Explain why each of the extra things on the wheelchair are required for you, and what could happen to your health if you don't get these special items.
- Describe where you are going to use your wheelchair. For example, you may use your wheelchair in your home, going to the store, for activities in the community, or going to work.
- Take measurements from your home of your hallways and doors to be sure that you will be able to use the customized wheelchair at your home.

If you are getting a powered wheelchair, even more information must be included. The therapist or physiatrist must tell Florida Medicaid why you need a powered wheelchair and that you will be able to use it. They must include the following information in the paperwork:

- That you are not able to use your arms well enough to move a regular wheelchair.
- That you will be able to operate your power chair safely.
- That you will be able to use your wheelchair where you live and spend your time.
- What type of daily activities you do and that you are able to move in and out of your wheelchair.

The therapist or physiatrist must fill out forms and send them to Florida Medicaid:

- They will complete a form called the Custom Wheelchair Evaluation, AHCA Med Serv Form 015. If they don't complete this form, the therapist or the physiatrist must describe the exact information that is required in this form.
- This information and your Certificate of Medical Necessity must be turned in to Florida Medicaid.
- The DME company will turn in all their information to Florida Medicaid.

You will have to have a customized wheelchair evaluation completed by a Physical or Occupational Therapist or a Psychiatrist (a special doctor with additional training to help people with serious injuries or disabilities). You may already go to one of these professionals; or the DME company may work with one of these types of professionals and want you to go to them. If that is the case, the company staff person will give you the contact information to make an appointment.

Next, you must make an appointment to have a customized wheelchair evaluation.

| What Must I Do  | What the Therapist or Psychiatrist Must Do  |
|---|---|
| Make an appointment with a therapist or psychiatrist for a              | Evaluate you to decide what kind of extra things you need on your   |
| Take my prescription or Certificate of Medical Necessity from my doctor | Explain to Florida Medicaid why you need these extra things or why  |
| Be ready to describe how I need to use my wheelchair.                   | Complete paperwork explaining why you need a customized wheelchair to stay healthy and do the things that you want to do. |
| Be willing for measurements to be taken at my home.                     |   |

#### Step 4 - Return to the DME company

The final step is to return all the paperwork to the DME company. You must bring the Certificate of Medical Necessity and wheelchair prescription from your physician and the completed Custom Wheelchair Evaluation form, AHCA Med Serv Form 015. If the therapist or psychiatrist did not complete this form, they must have completed a report that describes the exact information that is required in this form. You need to take that report to the DME company.

The DME company will submit all the paperwork for approval. The DME company must have an account with a company called eQHealth. This company has a contract with Florida Medicaid and is responsible for approving durable medical equipment for Florida Medicaid. The request must be submitted electronically through eQhealth system (eQSuite) at <http://fl.eqhs.org> eQHealth Solutions Customer Service can be reached toll free at: 855-444-3747, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

The wheelchair evaluation only lasts for six months, so you need to be sure that they send the information in to Florida Medicaid right away.

| What Must I Do   | What the DME Company Must Do                    |
|--|---|
| Return to the DME company.   | Submit the information to eQHealth immediately. |
| Take my prescription or Certificate of Medical Necessity from my doctor to the DME company.  | Follow-up with eQHealth and get approval.       |
| Take the form – Custom Wheelchair Evaluation, AHCA Med Serv Form 015 – or report from the therapist or physiatrist to the DME company. |   |
| Follow-up to be sure that the company submits the necessary information to eQHealth immediately.                                       |   |

#### Step 5 – Florida Medicaid approves your wheelchair

If Florida Medicaid approves your wheelchair, the DME company will order and build your wheelchair. The DME company will tell you about how long it will take to complete the customized wheelchair. Your new wheelchair must come with a one year warranty.

#### Step 6 - You must be trained in how to use your customized wheelchair

Your therapist or physiatrist must be there when you get your new wheelchair to be sure that it fits correctly and that you are going to be able to use it safely. Your DME company will arrange with your therapist or physiatrist for you to be trained in the use of your customized wheelchair.

The DME company is required to do the following things:

- Provide the customized wheelchair directly to you or your caregiver at the provider’s location, your home or school, or appropriate clinical location;
- Honor the manufacturer warranties in a timely manner;
- Maintain and repair equipment, per manufacturer recommendations; and
- Provide individual maintenance and maintain service records on your customized wheelchair.

#### If your request is not approved

If Florida Medicaid does not approve your wheelchair, they should tell you why they did not approve your request. If you do not think that they are correct, you can file a complaint with Florida Medicaid. If you are with a managed care company, you can use Florida Medicaid’s special complaint line. Your DME company, therapist, or Support

Coordinator can probably help you. More information is available at:

[https://apps.ahca.myflorida.com/smmc\\_cirts/](https://apps.ahca.myflorida.com/smmc_cirts/)

If you are not on a Florida Medicaid managed care plan, you can request a reconsideration. A Reconsideration of Medical Necessity Denial form will have to be sent to eQhealth through eQSuite.

You can find the reconsideration request form on <http://fl.eqhs.org> under the Therapy/DME tab, Forms and Downloads folder.

*Disclaimer: The information contained in this guide is for the use of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who receive services through Florida Medicaid and the iBudget Waiver. Families, Providers, and Support Coordinators may also benefit from this information. No endorsement by the Agency for Healthcare Administration or the Agency for Persons with Disabilities is provided or implied. Every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information provided in this guide. The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. does not accept any responsibility or liability for the accuracy, content, completeness, legality, or reliability of the information contained in this guide.*

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