

## Medicaid Level of Care

The Medicaid Level of Care is an assessment tool that identifies medical, psychosocial, functional, environmental, support system, and service needs in qualifying Medicaid beneficiaries. This assessment consists of a written evaluation conducted by a consulted nurse. The completed evaluation will indicate if an individual meets a “Skilled” or “Intermediate” level of care.

### **What services does the program provide?**

The Medicaid Level of Care assessment provides important information about where an individual should be placed to receive appropriate care. Those assessed at a “Skilled” level of care qualified for placement at a nursing facility that offers skilled nursing, therapy, and personal care services. Those assessed at an “Intermediate” level of care may be placed at a nursing facility, assisted living facility, or community long-term care.

### **Who is eligible for services?**

Individuals who are 65+ or who have a disability. Eligibility for Medicaid-sponsored long-term care is determined by the criteria for “Intermediate” and “Skilled” levels of care.

**Intermediate Level of Care:** Must have at least one of the four numbered Intermediate Services **AND** at least one of the numbered Functional Deficits listed below; **OR** at least two of the numbered Functional Deficits listed below.

### **Intermediate Services:**

1. Daily monitoring of a significant medical condition requiring overall care planning in order to maintain optimum health status. The individual should manifest a documented need which warrants such monitoring.
2. Supervision of moderate/severe memory, either long or short term, manifested by disorientation, bewilderment, and forgetfulness which requires significant intervention in overall care planning.
3. Supervision of moderately impaired cognitive skills manifested by decisions which may reasonably be expected to affect an individual's own safety.
4. Supervision of moderate problem behavior manifested by verbal abusiveness, physical abusiveness, or socially inappropriate/disruptive behavior.

### **Functional Deficits:**

1. Requires extensive assistance (hands-on) with dressing and toileting and eating and physical help in bathing. (All four must be present and, together, they constitute one deficit.)
2. Requires extensive assistance (hands-on) with locomotion.
3. Requires extensive assistance (hands-on) to transfer.
4. Requires frequent (hands on) with bladder or bowel incontinent care; **or** with daily catheter or ostomy care.

**Skilled Level of Care:** Must need at least one of the numbered Skilled Services (Items 1-11) and have at least one of the numbered Functional Deficits listed below. A person needing item #12 by itself qualifies for skilled level of care.

### **Skilled Services:**

1. Daily monitoring/observation and assessment due to an unstable medical condition which may include overall management and evaluation of a care plan which changes daily or several times a week.
2. Administration of medications which require frequent dosage adjustment, regulation, and monitoring.

3. Administration of parenteral medications and fluids which require frequent dosage adjustment, regulation, and monitoring. (Routine injection(s) scheduled daily or less frequently [such as insulin injection] do not qualify.)
4. Special catheter care (e.g., frequent irrigation, irrigation with special medications, frequent catheterizations for specific problems.)
5. Treatment of extensive decubitus ulcers or other widespread skin disorder. (Important considerations include: Signs of infections, full thickness tissue loss, or requirement of sterile technique)
6. A single goal-directed rehabilitative service (speech, physical, or occupational therapy) by a therapist 5 days per week. Combinations of therapies will satisfy this requirement.
7. Time-limited, goal-directed, educational services provided by professional or technical personnel to teach self-maintenance, such as education for newly-diagnosed or acute episodic conditions (e.g., medications, treatments, procedures).
8. Nasogastric tube or gastrostomy feedings.
9. Nasopharyngeal or tracheostomy aspirations or sterile tracheostomy care.
10. Administration of medical gases (e.g., oxygen) for the initial phase of condition requiring such treatment, monitoring, and evaluation (generally no longer than two week duration).
11. Daily skilled monitoring or observation for conditions that do not ordinarily require skilled care, but because of the combination of conditions, may result in special medical complications. In these situations, the complications and the skilled services required must be documented.
12. This individual is totally dependent in all activities of daily living: incapable of locomotion; unable to transfer; totally incontinent of urinary or bowel function; must be totally bathed and dressed and toileted and need extensive assistance to eat.

#### **Functional Deficits:**

1. Requires extensive assistance (hands-on) with dressing and toileting and eating, and physical help in bathing. (All four must be present and, together, they constitute one deficit.)
2. Requires extensive assistance (hands-on) with locomotion.
3. Requires extensive assistance (hands-on) to transfer.
4. Requires frequent (hands on) bladder or bowel incontinence care; or with daily catheter or ostomy care.

#### **How does someone apply for this program?**

To apply for South Carolina's Medicaid program (Healthy Connections), please visit <https://apply.scdhhs.gov/>

#### **Some important things to know about this program:**

Each individual being evaluated for Medicaid-sponsored long-term care should be highly involved in the assessment process as the information recorded should be obtained through an interview or observation of the person being assessed. In some scenarios, it may be appropriate for the individual to demonstrate certain functional abilities. Other sources of information, including family members and medical records, should be utilized as well.

#### **Where can I go for more information?**

This information was gathered from the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services *South Carolina Assessment & Level of Care Manual for Medicaid-Sponsored Long Term Care Services*. For more information, please visit the Medicaid website at <https://www.scdhhs.gov/>