



Guidelines for Routine Veterinary Care, Preventive Medications and Equipment for Service Dogs¹

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure coverage of the care and equipment necessary for this adaptive aid to fulfill its function of enabling the member to:

- Increase his or her ability to perform activities of daily living;
- Control the environment in which he or she lives; and
- Access, participate and function in his or her community.

Routine veterinary care consists of both preventative veterinary services and care and treatment necessary to maintain or restore the health and functionality of the service dog. Routine veterinary care, preventative medications and equipment for service dogs that are included in the Adaptive Aids services are as follows:

Routine Veterinary Care

1. One physical exam every twelve months – limited to the following examination of health aspects:
 - Vaccination status;
 - Parasite control for intestinal parasites, fleas, ticks, mites and heartworms;
 - Dental health – care given at home; mouth odors, pain or other signs of disease observed;
 - Nutrition – what the dog eats, how often, what supplements and treats are given, and changes in water consumption, weight or appetite;
 - Exercise – how much exercise the dog receives including how often and what kind; and any changes in the dog’s ability to exercise;
 - Ears and Eyes – discharge, redness or itching;
 - Stomach and intestines – vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, gas, belching or abnormal stools;
 - Breathing – coughing, shortness of breath, sneezing or nasal discharge;
 - Behavior – behavior problems such as barking, ‘accidents,’ or changes in temperament;
 - Feet and legs – limping, weakness or toenail problems;
 - Coat and skin – hair loss, pigment changes, lumps, itchy spots, shedding, mats or anal sac problems;

¹ MCOs must provide the member-oriented “[Service Dog Coverage Summary](#)” information sheet to members prior to the authorization of a service dog.

- Urogenital – discharges, heats, changes in mammary glands, urination difficulties or changes; and
 - Blood tests – especially for geriatric dogs, those with medical problems, and those who are receiving medications.
2. Diagnostic exams and care and treatment of illness and injury necessary to maintain or restore the health and functionality of the service dog.
 3. Core vaccines for distemper, canine adenovirus-2 (hepatitis and respiratory disease), canine parvovirus-2 and rabies. Non-core vaccines such as leptospirosis, coronavirus, canine parainfluenza and Bordetella bronchiseptica (both are causes of ‘kennel cough’), and Borrelia burgdorferi (causes Lyme Disease) may be included as appropriate.
 4. Annual heartworm test or at the frequency recommended by a veterinarian.
 5. Control of intestinal parasites at the frequency recommended by a veterinarian based on circumstances such as, the age of the service dog, the likelihood the service dog will be exposed to feces from other animals, whether the service dog is on a heartworm preventive that also controls intestinal parasites, and whether the service dog has been previously infected.

Preventative Medications

1. Monthly medication to prevent heartworms; and
2. Monthly medication to prevent fleas, ticks and other parasites.

Equipment

Equipment necessary for the service dog to perform its function. Typical service dog equipment includes, but is not limited to, vests, harnesses, leashes, identification patches and packs for transporting medications.

Non-Covered Items and Services

Items and services that are not covered include, but are not limited, to the following:

1. Dog food;
2. Vitamins;
3. Mineral supplements;
4. Treatment and care for progressive diseases or conditions that are irreversible and render the service dog unable to perform its adaptive aid function (for example, hip dysplasia, chronic renal failure, terminal cancer, canine degenerative myelopathy).
5. Holistic treatments;
6. Experimental medical procedures;
7. Organ transplants;
8. Cosmetic surgeries;
9. Treatment and care related to pregnancy;

10. Equipment and items not necessary for the service dog to perform his or her adaptive aid function.

If you have questions regarding this memo, please email DHSOFCE@wisconsin.gov.

Attachment:

[Service Dog Coverage Summary](#) (MS Word)

Contract reference:

2015 annual [DHS-MCO contract](#) (Addendum X.A.1)