

United Healthcare has recently announced a policy change. Effective Jan 1 2023, UHC will no longer cover home- and self-administered subcutaneous allergen immunotherapy. The AAOA, in conjunction with AAOHNS, is working to try to reverse this policy change.

In the meantime, we have developed a template letter you can share with your patients explaining the change and the impact on their immunotherapy, and encouraging them to bring the issue to the HR Director to apply pressure from the buyer's side.

For those of you who participate with UHC, we recommend you consider a signed consent for the potential out-of-pocket cost to the patient for uncovered services. Additionally, if you receive any updates to this new policy, please share them with us at advocacy@aaoallergy.org.

Below is a sample of the letter issued by UHC, followed by the patient letter template.

Re: Important changes to our environmental allergen immunotherapy medical policy

Dear Health Care Professional:

Beginning **Jan. 1, 2023**, we'll no longer cover home- and self-administered subcutaneous allergen immunotherapy. This will apply to all UnitedHealthcare commercial plan members, and we'll update the environmental allergen immunotherapy medical policy to reflect this change.

Reason for the policy update

We recently reviewed the home- and self-administered subcutaneous allergen immunotherapy policy and we've determined that this therapy is not medically necessary because the safety and effectiveness of this therapy hasn't been established.

What this means for you

Starting **Jan. 1, 2023**, we'll only cover claims for CPT® codes 95165 or 95199 with serum mixtures of environmental allergen immunotherapy in the following cases:

- When they're prepared and administered in a clinician's office
- Under the supervision of a trained medical professional as outlined in the medical policy

Learn more

You can review the medical policy at [UHCprovider.com](https://www.uhcprovider.com) > Resources > Policies and Protocols > Commercial Policies > Medical & Drug Policies and Coverage Determination Guidelines for UnitedHealthcare Commercial Plans > Medical Policy Update Bulletins. Then, search for "environmental allergen immunotherapy."

We're here to help

If you have questions, please call Provider Services at **877-842-3210**.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



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National Medical Director, Clinical Program Evaluation

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Dear Patient:

United Healthcare (UHC) recently informed providers and other stakeholders that UHC will no longer cover home allergy shots (also known as home or outpatient immunotherapy). **This policy will become effective January 1, 2023.** We were surprised to learn about this policy change since we are unaware of any other insurance company taking such a brazen step to limit access to allergy care.

What This Means for You:

Beginning January 1, 2023, you will have to go to your provider's office for all your allergy treatments. You will no longer be able to give yourself allergy shots in your home unless you are willing to pay out of pocket for at home treatment. If we cannot reverse this policy, and should you wish to continue at-home treatment you will have to consent to continuing your home immunotherapy and agree that it is your responsibility to pay for all the costs associated with at-home therapy. Alternatively, you may switch to therapy in the office, which will likely be covered by your insurance. We will verify this prior to treatment.

We understand the financial and logistical burden that this will place on patients, which is why we are working hard to reverse the new coverage policy.

What Are We Doing:

We have been fighting back with the help of others, including national medical specialty societies by writing letters to the medical director at UHC and requesting meetings to discuss the issue. We will continue to work with you to help in any way we can to ensure that you continue to receive the highest level of support and care.

What Can the Patient Do:

We need your help to get this policy reversed and suggest that you contact your employer's human resources (HR) department to discuss UHC's policy and ask that they, as the purchaser of the insurance plan, contact UHC on your behalf to discuss this issue. Tell your HR department that UHC has declared home immunotherapy "not medically necessary," claiming insufficient safety and efficacy data for allergy shots once patients leave the office setting. We believe there is no published literature to support this argument, but we have been unable to obtain access to the rationale for the change, therefore we cannot be certain as to the reason UHC will not cover home allergy therapy.

We believe that UHC needs to hear from those most directly affected by this policy and that is you, the patient. **Please call UHC today at (866) 414-1959** and demand they rescind their October 1, 2022 "Updated Environmental Allergen Immunotherapy Policy" immediately.