

**BULLETIN NUMBER:** 24-2019  
**TITLE:** FOLLOW-UP CARE  
**DATE:** OCTOBER 1, 2019

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**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this bulletin is to clarify coverage under NHI for follow up care after referral care to an off-island provider. This bulletin will further explain what NHI covers for follow up care and what fall under exclusions in the plan.

**BACKGROUND:**

Follow up care is commonly approved off-island due to lack of equipment and service not available in Palau. The two most common illness usually with follow up care are Diabetic Eye diseases and Cancer patients. NHI referral case history shows that patients return to the doctor for follow up appointments every 3-6 months during the first 1-2 years after treatment.

Follow up Care /Continuation of Care

Follow up Care refers to care given to a referral patient after finishing a treatment for a disease or injury. The attending physician that orders medical checkups, blood tests, and imaging test usually orders regular follow up care. Follow up care is the extent to which medical services received as coordinated and uninterrupted events consistent with the medical care of patients. Provider seen for the first visit is the same provider for the next visit, duplication of tests, examination and procedures minimized and medical care performed in one location.

**INTERPRETATION:**

For follow up care or continuation of treatment that extends to a new benefit year must obtain the approval of the Medical Referral Program and certification of coverage from the Plan Administrator.

Cancer cases and cancer related treatments that extends over one benefit year will be subject to the review of the Medical Referral Committee and Plan Administrator for re-evaluation on medical necessity and approval of coverage. In cancer patients, one purpose of the follow-up care is checking to see if the cancer has come back or has spread to other parts of the body. Coverage under NHI limited to test and imaging not readily available at local facility. Any request for follow up care to be covered under the NHI plan will be subject to distant consultation between local referring physicians and off-island provider for medical necessity. The process of distant consultation is beneficial to patient from Palau who have received care from doctors and specialist from an off-island provider as it allows local physicians to communicate with off-island doctors for alternative care that does not involve sending patients' off-island.

<b>Follow Up Care Coverage</b>	<b>Follow Up Care Non Covered Services/Items</b>
<b>Medical Tests (not available in Palau)</b>	<b>Prescribed Medications</b>
<b>Imaging (CT scans, MRI, X-rays)</b>	<b>Unrelated health problems</b>
<b>Diagnostic Tests, imaging, exam not available in Palau</b>	