

**Office of Medicaid
BOARD OF HEARINGS**

Appellant Name and Address:



Appeal Decision:	Approved	Appeal Number:	2518569
Decision Date:	1/22/2026	Hearing Date:	01/14/2026
Hearing Officer:	Amy B. Kullar, Esq.		

Appearance for Appellant:
Pro se

Appearance for MassHealth:
Robin Brown, OTR/L, Clinical Reviewer, Optum



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Office of Medicaid
Board of Hearings
100 Hancock Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02171*

APPEAL DECISION

Appeal Decision:	Approved	Issue:	Prior Authorization; Durable Medical Equipment (DME)
Decision Date:	1/22/2026	Hearing Date:	01/14/2026
MassHealth's Rep.:	Robin Brown, OTR/L	Appellant's Rep.:	<i>Pro se</i>
Hearing Location:	Quincy Harbor South 2 (Virtual)	Aid Pending:	No

Authority

This hearing was conducted pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 118E, Chapter 30A, and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder.

Jurisdiction

Through a notice dated November 26, 2025, MassHealth denied the appellant's prior authorization request for a self-propel shower chair. *See* Exhibit 1. The appellant filed this appeal in a timely manner on December 15, 2025. *See* 130 CMR 610.015(B) and Exhibit 2. Denial of a request for durable medical equipment is a valid basis for appeal. *See* 130 CMR 610.032.

Action Taken by MassHealth

MassHealth denied the appellant's prior approval request for a self-propel shower chair.

Issue

The appeal issue is whether MassHealth erred in denying the appellant's request for coverage of a self-propel shower chair.

Summary of Evidence

The appellant, an adult between the ages of [REDACTED] appeared at the hearing via videoconference and verified his identity. MassHealth was represented by a licensed occupational therapist/clinical reviewer who also appeared via videoconference. Below is a summary of the testimony and evidence submitted for hearing:

The MassHealth representative testified that on November 26, 2025, MassHealth received a prior authorization (PA) request from [REDACTED] (“Provider”) on behalf of the appellant for a new self-propel shower chair, specifically, the Raz Design, Inc. Self Propel Mobile shower chair. MassHealth made a timely decision on November 26, 2025, denying the requested shower chair because MassHealth determined that the requested shower chair is a “duplication of equipment request.” The appellant was approved for, and received, a shower chair under prior authorization number [REDACTED] in 2023. Testimony; Exhibit 1. The cost of the denied requested shower chair to MassHealth is \$2,414.33 per the [REDACTED] order¹. Testimony; See *also*, Exhibit 5 at 10-12. Included in the PA request packet is a letter of medical necessity from a physical therapist at the appellant’s rehabilitation hospital. *Id.* at 14-15.

According to the information provided in the letter of medical necessity, the appellant is a [REDACTED] year-old male, and he has decreased functional mobility secondary to T10 paraplegia from a motor vehicle accident in [REDACTED]; his medical history includes T8-T12 spinal fusion in May 2023, traumatic brain injury (TBI), closed fracture of the ribs, subdural hematoma, neurogenic bladder, neurogenic bowel, inferior vena cava thrombosis, anxiety, and hyperlipidemia. The letter from the appellant’s physical therapist states that

[Appellant] is unable to ambulate and relies upon his current shower chair for bathing. With his current chair he is unable to self propel and relies on his caregiver to move the chair into position for safe showering and toileting. He is moving into his own home and requires a new shower chair that he will be able to self propel, independently complete both bathing and toileting, and that holds him in a safe position during bowel and bladder program as well as showering.

Id.

The MassHealth representative testified that the new PA request for a shower chair was denied because MassHealth approved a prior authorization request for a shower chair for the appellant to meet his needs in [REDACTED]. The MassHealth regulations allow for the approval of shower chairs once every five years if medical necessity has been established. She stated that medical necessity is defined as “preventing, alleviating, or correcting a medical condition with no suitable, more conservative, or less costly alternative.” Testimony. The MassHealth

¹ The cost of the appellant’s current shower chair was \$980.34 in 2023. Testimony.

representative referenced the MassHealth prehearing submission; an image of the requested item and the shower chair the appellant previously received from MassHealth in 2023 is on pages 23-25. The newly requested shower chair looks like a wheelchair. The appellant has a version without wheels from his approved PA request in 2023. Testimony. MassHealth will not approve the DME under the current request because this request is “a duplication of equipment already available to the member” and “a medical necessity was not established for the need” for a new shower chair. Testimony. Furthermore, no documentation was provided with the request that shows that the appellant’s existing shower chair is broken, unsafe, or unusable. Testimony.

The MassHealth representative continued her testimony. She stated

The other consideration into this denial was the fact that [Appellant] currently has 55 hours and 15 minutes per week of PCA services which includes 60 minutes a day for maximum assistance with bathing and bathing transfers, so another regulation that was considered in this is the regulation 130 CMR 409.414 of the durable medical necessity regulations for non-covered services². The MassHealth agency does not pay for durable medical equipment determined by the MassHealth agency not to be medically necessary pursuant to 130 CMR 450.204. This includes, but is not limited to, items that cannot reasonably be expected to make a meaningful contribution to the treatment of the member's illness or injury, are more costly than medically appropriate and feasible alternative pieces of equipment, or serve the same purpose as durable medical equipment already in use by the member.

Testimony.

The appellant responded to MassHealth’s testimony. He agreed that in 2023, his current chair did meet his medical needs and was appropriate at that time. However, the appellant’s living situation is changing, and his current shower chair will not accommodate the appellant’s medical needs anymore. He stated, “I’ll be living alone, I need to be able to safely perform my bath and shower routine independently. The shower chair I currently have is a stationary piece of equipment that I can't move myself. Attempting to lift or reposition this chair would put me at risk for injury.” Testimony. The appellant continued his testimony,

My medical needs require equipment that allows for safe independent mobility and positioning. If I'm forced to use the shower chair that I currently have, I'm required to perform more transfers compared to the self-propelled model. And increasing the number of transfers places unnecessary strain on my arms, which are very important for me since I'm a paraplegic and significantly increases my risk of injury. A self-propelled shower chair would allow me to safely position

² The hourly rate for Personal Care Attendant (PCA) services is at least \$19.50 per hour. See, MassHealth Administrative Bulletin 25-01.

myself and reduce transfer related risks and injuries.

Testimony.

The Hearing Officer then asked the MassHealth representative a clarifying question about her testimony regarding the PCA hours that the appellant is currently receiving. The MassHealth representative confirmed that because the appellant is receiving PCA hours each week for toileting and bathing transfers, MassHealth cannot approve the current request for the self-propel shower chair; MassHealth would consider the self-propel shower chair as duplicative of the PCA hours for toileting and bathing transfers. In response, the appellant acknowledged that he would need fewer PCA hours if he received the shower chair and he would be in agreement with an adjustment to those PCA categories of assistance. Testimony. The appellant looks forward to achieving more independence in bathing and toileting with a self-propel shower chair. He stated, "My current shower chair does not meet my medical safety or functional needs. A self-propelled shower chair is medically necessary to allow me to perform activities of daily living safely, independently and with reduced risk of injury." Testimony. The appellant emphasized that he really needs a self-propel shower chair because sometimes he has accidents at different times of the day, and he would like to be able to clean himself safely and independently at any time of day, without having to call his father to come to his home and help him transfer safely.

The MassHealth representative responded to the appellant's testimony. She confirmed that that the appellant receives PCA services and his current service period ends in July 2026. The appellant receives 60 minutes per day in PCA assistance for bathing. She did not calculate the toileting transfer time. The situation is a duplication. She testified, "the PCA can't get paid for the same thing that you're doing by yourself...Maybe the first thing to do is consider submitting for an adjustment to your PCA services so that there wouldn't exist a duplication and then we could look at approving this equipment." Testimony. Unfortunately, as of the hearing date, the MassHealth representative is bound by the MassHealth rules and regulations regarding durable medical equipment, and she must stand on MassHealth's determination. Testimony.

Findings of Fact

Based on a preponderance of the evidence, I find the following:

1. On November 26, 2025, MassHealth received a PA request from on behalf of the appellant for new self-propel shower chair, specifically, the Raz Design, Inc. Self Propel Mobile shower chair. Testimony.
2. MassHealth denied the appellant's prior authorization request on November 26, 2025, and the appellant filed this appeal in a timely manner on December 15, 2025. Exhibits 1 and 2.

3. The appellant is a ■-year-old male who has decreased functional mobility secondary to T10 paraplegia from a motor vehicle accident in ■ his medical history includes T8-T12 spinal fusion in May 2023, traumatic brain injury (TBI), closed fracture of the ribs, subdural hematoma, neurogenic bladder, neurogenic bowel, inferior vena cava thrombosis, anxiety, and hyperlipidemia. Exhibit 5.
4. The cost to MassHealth of the denied requested shower chair is \$2,414.33. Testimony, Exhibit 5.
5. The appellant's current shower chair is almost three years old. The appellant cannot safely maneuver his current chair, and he must perform more transfers to perform his bathing and toileting activities of daily living, which strains the appellants arms and increases his risk of injury.
6. The appellant currently receives 55 hours and 15 minutes per week of personal care attendant (PCA) services through MassHealth, which includes 60 minutes a day for maximum assistance with bathing and bathing transfers. Testimony.
7. The appellant acknowledged that he would need fewer PCA hours if he received the self-propel shower chair and he would be in agreement with an adjustment to those PCA categories. Testimony.

Analysis and Conclusions of Law

MassHealth requires prior authorization for durable medical equipment requests. *See* 130 CMR 409.418. MassHealth covers medically necessary Durable Medical Equipment (DME) that can be appropriately used in the member's home or setting in which normal life activities take place, and in certain circumstances described in 130 CMR 409.415 for use in facilities. *See* 130 CMR 409.413(A). All DME must be approved for community use by the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA). *See* 130 CMR 409.413(A). DME that is appropriate for use in the member's home may also be used in the community. *See* 130 CMR 409.413(A).

MassHealth covers the DME listed in Subchapter 6 of the Durable Medical Equipment Manual, the DME and Oxygen Payment and Coverage Guideline Tool, and any successor guidance issued by the MassHealth agency or its designee. *See* 130 CMR 409.413(B).

By regulation, MassHealth will not pay a provider for services that are not medically necessary. Pursuant to 130 CMR 450.204(A), a service is considered "medically necessary" if:

(1) it is reasonably calculated to prevent, diagnose, prevent the worsening of, alleviate, correct, or cure conditions in the recipient that endanger life, cause suffering or pain, cause physical deformity or malfunction, threaten to cause or to aggravate a handicap, or result in illness or infirmity; and

(2) there is no other medical service or site of service, comparable in effect, available and suitable for the member requesting the service, that is more conservative or less costly to MassHealth (130 CMR 450.204(A)).

Pursuant to 130 CMR 409.414, MassHealth does not pay for the following:

(B) DME that is determined by the MassHealth agency not to be medically necessary pursuant to 130 CMR 409.000, and 130 CMR 450.204: Medical Necessity. This includes, but is not limited to, items that:

- (1) cannot reasonably be expected to make a meaningful contribution to the treatment of a member's illness, disability, or injury;
- (2) are more costly than medically appropriate and feasible alternative pieces of equipment; or
- (3) serve the same purpose as DME already in use by the member, with the exception of the devices described in 130 CMR 409.413(D)...

The appellant, a [REDACTED]-year-old man who has decreased functional mobility secondary to T10 paraplegia from a motor vehicle accident in [REDACTED], requested a Raz Design, Inc. Self Propel Mobile shower chair on November 26, 2025. MassHealth denied this request because it considers a new shower chair to be a duplication of services; the appellant received a shower chair from MassHealth in 2023, and the appellant receives PCA services for assistance with bathing and toileting transfers from MassHealth.

At hearing, MassHealth argued that the requested self-propel shower chair serves the same purpose as durable medical equipment already in use by the appellant. The evidence at hearing revealed that the appellant's current shower chair is no longer meeting the appellant's needs. The appellant has been a paraplegic since a motor vehicle accident in May 2023, he received his current shower chair that same year; the evidence at hearing showed that the appellant's circumstances and medical needs in 2026 are substantially different from his needs in 2023. The appellant credibly testified he is moving into an independent living situation and that he is seeking a self-propel shower chair to achieve greater independence, and therefore, rely less on his PCA services for bathing and toileting transfers. He cannot move his existing shower chair without the assistance of a caregiver, but he credibly testified that he would be able to move the new chair that is requested. The cost of the self-propel shower chair is \$2,414.33. MassHealth regulations state that the hourly PCA compensation rate is at least \$19.50 per hour. Therefore, the cost to MassHealth to hire a PCA to assist the appellant with transfers for bathing only for 60 minutes per day, 365 days per year, is at least \$7,115.50. At hearing, the appellant acknowledged that he

would need fewer PCA hours if he received the shower chair and he would be in agreement with an adjustment to those PCA categories.

MassHealth argued that because the appellant has an existing shower chair and the appellant receives PCA services, it cannot approve the requested self-propel shower chair; however, the appellant's testimony that he cannot safely maneuver his existing shower chair is credible. Additionally, the appellant agreed that he would need fewer PCA hours if he received the self-propel shower chair, and that he looks forward to being able to meet his own needs safely and without PCA assistance. The Hearing Officer is persuaded by the testimony and record evidence that the appellant's requested self-propel shower chair does not serve the same purpose as DME already in use by the appellant, and that providing a new, self-propel shower chair to the appellant will be less costly to MassHealth.

As such, the appellant's requested Raz Design, Inc. Self Propel Mobile shower is not "comparable in effect" to the appellant's existing shower chair. Accordingly, the current request is "medically necessary" as defined in subsections (1) and (2) of 130 CMR 450.204. Similarly, it is "necessary and reasonable" under 130 CMR 409.414(B).

The appeal is therefore APPROVED.

Order for MassHealth

Approve the requested Raz Design, Inc. Self Propel Mobile shower chair.

Implementation of this Decision

If this decision is not implemented within 30 days after the date of this decision, you should contact your MassHealth Enrollment Center. If you experience problems with the implementation of this decision, you should report this in writing to the Director of the Board of Hearings, at the address on the first page of this decision.

Amy B. Kullar, Esq.
Hearing Officer
Board of Hearings

MassHealth Representative: Optum MassHealth LTSS, P.O. Box 159108, Boston, MA 02215