

Associate Frequently Asked Questions

Beginning January 1, 2023, all outpatient procedures will require a prior consultation with Specialist Management Solutions (SMS). More information on the requirement and how to engage with SMS can be found on page 2. Associates who do not complete this may be subject to a \$300 penalty.

? What is Specialist Management Solutions (SMS)?

SMS is part of your health plan and simplifies your path to affordable access to quality surgery. Think of SMS as a surgical concierge service. In one phone call to SMS, you get instant access to a care advocate who will help you find a local surgeon who specializes in your condition, schedule an appointment for you, and talk to you about your options for where you can receive care for a surgery or other outpatient procedure. SMS will be available for you or your family member(s) throughout the entire surgical experience and will be available to answer any questions or provide assistance at any time.

? Why Should I Call SMS?

Having surgery or another outpatient procedure can be overwhelming and expensive, often resulting in hefty out-of-pocket costs. SMS can guide you to a surgeon in your community who specializes in your condition, and who can help you choose the best setting for your procedure. The SMS Care Advocate can provide you with all the necessary information to help guide you through the entire experience of surgery.

SMS-affiliated surgeons regularly perform surgeries at quality ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs). If it is appropriate for you to receive care at an ASC, you may be eligible for cost savings. In fact, outpatient surgical procedures performed in ASCs cost half as much, on average, then those performed in hospital outpatient settings.

Plus, SMS is available to you at no extra cost. It's already included in your health benefits.

? How Do I Find a Surgeon Who Specializes in My Condition?

It's simple. If you are facing the possibility of surgery, call SMS. SMS will connect you to a surgeon who specializes in your condition. You'll also learn about options for surgery locations and the costs associated with those options.

? How Do I Identify The Right Surgeon? How Will I Know I Am Getting a Quality Surgeon?

For most people, surgery is a rare occurrence. When surgery is needed, the options can be overwhelming. Finding the right surgeon can be part of that. The SMS Care Advocate can talk with you about your individual situation and connect you to a local surgeon who specializes in your condition. SMS-affiliated surgeons are not limited to a few specialties; they can address all outpatient surgical needs. Surgeons in the SMS alliance are carefully selected for their quality performance and patient satisfaction.

? Should I Contact SMS After I've Met With My Surgeon?

The SMS Care Advocate is there to guide you throughout your entire surgical care experience. You can contact the care advocate for any surgical assistance and consultations. You should call your SMS Care Advocate with any questions and they will be able to help with arranging a second-opinion appointment, inform you how your surgery day will proceed at an ambulatory surgery center, and answer any other questions you might have.

NEW FOR 2023

Beginning January 1, 2023, all outpatient procedures will require a prior consultation with SMS (Specialist Management Solutions). Please call 833-381-2223 to speak with an SMS Care Advocate before you or your family member(s) schedule any outpatient procedure. Associates who do not complete this may be subject to a \$300 penalty.

Below are a list of common specialties and outpatient procedures that will require engagement with SMS prior to a procedure taking place. Please note: this is not a comprehensive list.

| Specialty Name | Area of focus | Common Surgeries / Procedures |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Orthopedics | Shoulder & Elbow, Hand & Wrist, Joint Replacement, Trauma, Tumor, Spine, Sports Medicine, Foot & Ankle | Arthroscopy, Soft Tissue Repair, Fusion, Osteotomy, Joint Replacement, Rotator Cuff Repair |
| General Surgery | Esophagus, Abdomen, Breast, Skin, Small Intestine, Large Intestine, Liver, Pancreas, Thyroid Gland, Appendix and Bile Ducts | Cyst Removal, Thyroid surgery, Gallbladder Removal, Hernia Repair |
| Gynecology | Fundus, Fallopian tube, Ovary, Myometrium, Endometrium, Vagina, Cervix, Female Reproductive Organs | Cervical Cryosurgery, Colposcopy, Dilation and Curettage (D&C), Hysteroscopy, Hysterectomy, Myomectomy, Oophorectomy, Pelvic Laparoscopy |
| Urology | Kidneys, Ureters, Urinary bladder, Urethra, Male Reproductive Organs | Cystourethroscopy and Cystoscopy, Lithotripsy |
| Musculoskeletal (Spine) | Vertebrae, Intervertebral Discs, Spinal Column, Spinal Cord, Dura, Lamina | Vertebroplasty/Kyphoplasty, Decompressions, Cervical Fusions, Disc Replacement, Lumbar Fusions |
| Podiatry | Feet | Tendon and ligamentous repair, Bunionectomy, Heel Spur |
| Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) | Ears, Nose, & Throat | Tonsillectomy and Adenoidectomy, Tympanoplasty and Mastoidectomy, Cochlear Implants, Functional Endoscopic Sinus Surgery |
| Ophthalmology | Retina, Glaucoma, Pediatrics, Cornea, Oculoplastic | Cataract Intraocular Lens (IOL), Retina Surgery |
| Plastics | Entire Body | Cosmetic Surgery, Reconstructive Surgery |
| Gastroenterology | Esophagus, Stomach, Small Intestine, Colon, Pancreas, Gallbladder, Liver | Colonoscopy, Upper GI Endoscopy (EGD), Endoscopic Bariatric Balloon, Hemorrhoid Energy Therapy (HET) |
| Cardiovascular | Heart, Circulatory System | Cardiac Event Monitors, Pacemaker Implants, Cardiovascular Procedures |

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When Do I Call SMS?

Call SMS when you need help finding a specialist or think that you may need a procedure in the future. If you already have a provider or have an established care plan, you should still call SMS to learn more about your outpatient surgical options and ensure that you are fulfilling the requirement.



What if I Already Have an Appointment Scheduled and/or Established Provider?

You should still call SMS! You are not required to change your provider or appointment. Not only will the call ensure that you meet the requirements and do not get penalized, but the SMS Care Advocates will take the opportunity to review your surgical options and provide any additional support or guidance.



Why is There a Requirement?

SMS Care Advocates are here to help you find high-quality, cost-effective care. They will walk you through every step of the process, educating you on the benefits of Ambulatory Surgery Centers and helping you find a local, in-network provider.



Who do I contact if I have a concern about the penalty or to make an appeal?

If a claim processed with a penalty and you believe there was a mistake because you engaged with SMS prior to your procedure, or if you would like to know more about why the penalty was applied, please call the UHC customer service team at the phone number listed on the back of your insurance card.



Are dependents under the age of 18 included?

A penalty will apply if you or your covered dependents, children included, do not engage with SMS prior to your qualifying procedure. SMS will gladly assist your entire family through their surgery and will be available to answer any questions and provide assistance at any time.



How soon do I need to reach out?

We encourage all PetSmart Associates to reach out to SMS as soon as possible to ensure the best possible solution for your upcoming surgery. However, you can reach out as late as the day prior to your procedure to fulfil the requirement and avoid the penalty.