

March 16, 2026

PROVIDER ALERT: New Benefit - Cell and Gene Therapy Access Model

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2026

As of January 1, 2026, DC Healthy Families enrollees may now more easily access cell and gene therapies for sickle cell disease as a result of the Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF) participation in the federal [Cell and Gene Therapy \(CGT\) Access Model](#).

The CGT Access Model, administered by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), is a new federal initiative that tests whether CMS-led outcomes-based agreements (OBAs) increase Medicaid beneficiaries' ability to access innovative treatments, improve their health outcomes, and reduce healthcare costs and burden to state Medicaid programs.

The District of Columbia (DC) has twice the prevalence rate of sickle cell disease as compared to the National Medicaid Population (74 per 100,000 Medicaid enrollees). Approximately 170 per 100,000 DC Medicaid enrollees have sickle cell disease, including approximately 150 MedStar Family Choice DC enrollees, though some may not meet the clinical criteria to qualify for either of the cell and gene therapies.

The FDA approved two cell and gene therapies (Casgevy and Lyfgenia) for those Medicaid participants with sickle cell disease that meet the CMS clinical criteria as summarized below.

Coverage of CGT is limited to Medicaid participants, aged 12 and older, with a confirmed diagnosis via genetic testing for sickle cell disease.

Other Clinical criteria for Casgevy include:

- Failure or intolerance of Hydroxyurea
- Receiving transfusion therapy for recurrent severe vaso-occlusive episodes (VOEs); or
- Experiences four or more VOEs in the past 24 months
- The enrollee is clinically stable and fit for transplantation.

Other Clinical criteria for Lyfgenia include:

- Failure or intolerance of Hydroxyurea
- Experiences at least two vaso-occlusive crisis' (VOCs) each year for the past two years
- Prescribed by (or in consultation with) a board-certified hematologist
- The enrollee is clinically stable and fit for hematopoietic stem cell transplantation
- Eligible to receive transplantation
- Has not received prior transplantation.

Children's National Hospital is currently the only authorized treatment center within DC and University of Maryland in Baltimore City is an authorized treatment center for Casgevy.

Medicaid Managed Care Plans are responsible for all healthcare costs associated with the CGTs, such as pre-treatment diagnostics, genetic testing, and evaluations, facility costs inpatient or outpatient for therapy administration, physician and provider professional fees, observation and post-treatment monitoring, adverse event management and supportive care, behavioral health and care coordination services, and transportation services.

DHCF is responsible for the reimbursement of approved CGT medications (Casgevy/Lyfgenia). Providers must obtain prior authorization from DHCF's vendor, Comagine Health for CGT medications before administering inpatient CGT services. The link to the DHCF prior authorization forms for Casgevy and Lyfgenia may be found below:

- [DHCF Casgevy PA Form](#)
- [DHCF Lyfgenia PA Form](#)

Upon approval from DHCF (Comagine Health) for either Casgevy or Lyfgenia, MedStar Family Choice DC will issue prior authorization for required evaluations, inpatient hospital or outpatient care, ancillary care, and return visits for long term follow-up care for enrollees to receive CGT. When requesting prior authorization Providers must submit the following documentation in addition to the prior authorization forms:

- Diagnosis confirmation
- Patient history of prior treatment failures
- Justification for the therapy
- Other relevant and necessary clinical documentation.

For questions concerning this Provider Alert, please contact the MedStar Family Choice DC Provider Customer Service Department, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Phone: **800-261-3371** or

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