

Guidelines to assist in determining a “Life Threatening Condition” for the State of Minnesota Vacation Donation Program

Minnesota Management & Budget (MMB) is the administrator of this program

This guideline is a decision tool to assist the Vacation Donation Program Administrator in determining if the employee or employee’s spouse or dependent child’s illness or injury is “life threatening.” This decision tool may also serve as a resource for the Vacation Donation applicant and/or medical personal. This decision tree was developed with Care Delivery Management, Inc. an affiliate of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota.

STEP 1:

Determine the category of the primary diagnosis or condition for which the application is being made:

- Category One - Life threatening medical event/episode or accident
- Category Two - Terminal Disease or Chronic Illness

STEP 2:

Apply the appropriate guidelines below for either Category One or Category Two.

A. Category One

Life threatening medical event/episode or accident (heart attack, stroke, traumatic injuries)

1. The primary condition can cause immediate or eventual death in the person or there are other concurrent conditions present that increase this person’s risk of death beyond that of another person with the same primary diagnosis.

No ----- not eligible for benefit

Yes ----- **continue analysis**

2. The condition or event is life threatening because without immediate treatment for the condition, death is eminent.

No ----- not eligible for benefit

Example — a broken limb, back or shoulder surgical condition that is urgent due to severity of pain, loss of function or neurological impairment may cause an extensive period of disability but is not a fatal condition in and of itself.

Yes ----- **may be eligible - continue analysis**

Example - a heart attack or stroke, an accident causing internal bleeding for which surgery is required, a respiratory disorder for which hospitalization is required.

3. The condition remains life threatening even following immediate, appropriate treatment for the condition. There are other conditions / circumstances present that extend the acute phase beyond what is typical or the post hospitalization or post-acute phase is complicated, unstable or tenuous thereby increasing the risk of death.

No ----- not eligible for benefit

Example - hospitalization is required because of a serious, life threatening medical or surgical condition that requires immediate treatment. However, the outcome is such that the person does not have significant complications or impairment as a result of the acute episode which required hospitalization. The person is able to resume near normal activity within a few weeks of release from the hospital. Outpatient care is routine follow up rather than rehabilitation or home care based. The person's condition is stable and no longer considered life threatening.

Yes ----- **end of analysis, eligible for benefit**

Example - a life threatening medical or surgical condition is present requiring hospitalization. Treatment has not been successful in stabilizing the condition or following the acute and life threatening phase, there is a period of rehabilitation required or a period of instability present that continues to require close medical monitoring by a health care professional to prevent a relapse or deterioration that could return the person to a life threatening stage. This monitoring may be required to adjust medications, provide treatments or assess for signs of instability and complications associated with the recovery phase of the condition.

A. Category Two

Terminal Disease or Chronic Illness (cancer, organ failure, chronic lung disease)

1. The primary condition is a disease or chronic illness expected to cause death in the immediate or near future without ongoing and frequent comprehensive life-supporting health care treatment directly provided by a health care professional.

No ----- not eligible for benefit

Yes ----- **continue analysis**

2. The severity of the condition is such that it significantly impairs the person's activities and requires on-going, frequent medical care from a health care professional to prolong life or provide palliative care. This care is given to provide treatments and/or assess for signs of instability and complications associated with the progression of the disease and response to treatment.

No ----- not eligible for benefit

Example - there is a cancer diagnosis present but treatment is non-invasive and uncomplicated. The symptoms from the disease and/or the treatment are clinically mild and do not create severe side effects, complications or extensive impairment in activities. The person maintains a near normal activity level with physician follow-up every few months. The cancer is not an aggressive type or is in a remission.

Yes ----- **end of analysis, eligible for benefit**

Example - there is a cancer diagnosis present that requires frequent medical monitoring and care by health care professionals. Medical care consists of adjusting medications, providing treatments or assessment for signs of instability and complications associated with the disease progression or treatment. The symptoms from the disease and/or the treatment are moderate to severe and significantly impair the person's activities. The person's condition is expected to steadily decline. Their disease is in, or nearing, the final stages.

To Help Determine The Severity Of A Condition:

- Examine the type and level of treatment that is being provided.
Was inpatient hospitalization required?
Was the hospitalization elective or an urgent / emergency admission?
What was the severity of the condition? Was intensive care required?
How long was the hospitalization?
How is the person being followed since discharge from the hospital?
What services are being provided during the outpatient phase of treatment?
- Examine the response to treatment.
Are there complications occurring that are altering the person's expected response to treatment?
What is the person's level of function?

- Examine the outlook or prognosis for this individual person in respect to their diagnosis or condition.

Is the person expected to die from the condition or a complication of the condition? Is death eminent?

If death is not eminent right now, have there been any acute life threatening episodes as described above or is the condition relatively stable?