

2021 BERA Policy Update

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

General

1. How is the 2021 BERA policy different from the 2020 BERA policy?

The goal of the 2021 BERA policy revisions is to provide additional clarification to the policy. An exhibit has been added to the policy that provides a specific list of what is approved or not approved within each category. See Exhibit A in the BERA Policy for a complete list of approved items.

If an item is not listed in the policy, clinicians can email BERA@envisionhealth.com to have the item reviewed for a decision. The BERA Review Committee will meet regularly to review requests and provide determinations of approval.

A few of the most notable changes to the policy are:

- Embroidered jackets have been added as lab coat equivalents.
- Spanish educational materials, apps and courses have been added as approved expenses.
- Travel expense reimbursement requires proof of earned CME or CPE.
- The expenses for classes, seminars, tests, licenses and memberships are based on the Plan Year in which the educational obligation is fulfilled or the license/membership start date, regardless of the date purchased.
- Clinicians that would like to do volunteer relief work can request pre-approval for BERA reimbursement of travel expenses by emailing BERA@envisionhealth.com and providing the requested documentation on the organization and planned clinical activities.

2. When does the 2021 BERA policy take effect?

The 2021 BERA policy applies to any purchases made on or after March 20, 2021. Because we know some clinicians have already accrued expenses in 2021, any purchases made on or before March 19, 2021 will be held to the 2020 BERA Policy.

3. When can I begin submitting 2021 BERA expenses?

2021 BERA expenses can be submitted through Concur starting Monday, April 19, 2021.

4. Can I still submit BERA expenses from 2020 or other prior years?

No, any BERA expenses that apply to the 2020 Plan Year or before can no longer be submitted. However, if there was an expense incurred in 2020 for an educational event or seminar that will occur in 2021, the educational expense would apply to the 2021 Plan Year and the expense can be submitted after the educational event has been attended. If there are license renewals, memberships or subscriptions that were paid for in 2020 but which have a start date in 2021, those expenses apply to the 2021 Plan Year and can be submitted.

5. What if there is an item I want to purchase that is not listed in the policy?

If an item is not specifically addressed in the policy, clinicians may request pre-approval for an item prior to making the purchase. Clinicians can email BERA@envisionhealth.com to request pre-approval for an item *prior* to purchase. It is recommended that clinicians not make the purchase until after the approval is given because reimbursement is not guaranteed. A determination will be provided within 20 days.

6. Who do I contact if I have additional questions about the BERA policy?

Email the BERA Review Committee at BERA@EnvisionHealth.com.

Policy Questions

7. Were there any changes made to the BERA travel policy?

There is additional clarification in the policy for BERA travel. Travel and related travel expenses are approved only for CME or CPE qualifying events. Travel and expenses must be submitted after the event with *proof that the CME or CPE was obtained*. CME/CPE that is obtained virtually or online does not qualify for travel reimbursement.

For clinicians that are interested in using BERA for travel expenses for volunteer medical services relief work, these pre-approval requests can be emailed to BERA@envisionhealth.com prior to making the commitment. Additional information and documentation may be requested.

8. Can I use BERA to buy a computer or cell phone and to pay my monthly internet and cell phone bills?

If these items are required to perform your clinical duties, these items should be provided by the hospital, site or [Envision IT](#). All electronics including computers, cell phones, tablets, monitors, printers and smart watches are **not eligible** for reimbursement through BERA. Cell phone bills and internet service bills are not eligible for reimbursement through BERA.

9. Can BERA be used for clothing and apparel?

The following items used for working in the clinical environment qualify for BERA: scrubs, scrub hats, lab coats, a lab coat equivalent of \$150 or less (such as an embroidered jacket to wear in the clinical setting), medical bag used exclusively for carrying items to work (max \$150 annually) and non-slip protective shoes to be worn exclusively in the clinical environment (max \$150 annually). Other apparel items which are not eligible for BERA include: dress shoes, socks, underwear, under scrubs, suits, dresses, formal attire, business casual clothing, personal bags and suitcases, blue light glasses, prescription classes, contacts and dry cleaning.

10. Is Personal Protective Equipment covered under BERA?

Envision supports all clinicians in having the proper PPE to perform their clinical responsibilities safely. Generally, hospitals and sites should supply the PPE. If a clinician has a need for PPE that is not being met, they can email BERA@EnvisionHealth.com for assistance.

Substantiation

11. Can I submit a credit card statement instead of a receipt?

No, a credit card statement alone is not adequate substantiation for reimbursement. BERA is an accountable plan that must meet IRS documentation requirements. Receipts or invoices must include the date of purchase, vendor name, specific item(s) or service(s) purchased and amount for each item or service.

12. If I purchase an educational course, renew a license or membership, or pay for travel now that does not start until later in the Plan Year, can I get reimbursed now?

Educational CME/CPE courses and travel expenses can be submitted only *after* the educational event has occurred with proof of CME/CPE. If licenses or memberships are renewed for a future date, those expenses can be submitted *after* the start date of the renewal.

Concur allows clinicians to create an expense report and upload payment substantiation when the registration or booking occurs. After the education date or license renewal date, the clinician can then submit the expense report for reimbursement.