MONTANA INDEPENDENT LIVING PROJECT
Orientation & Mobility FAQ

What is Orientation & Mobility (O&M)?	Orientation & Mobility (O&M) skill instruction helps a student with low vision or blindness identify where they are in space and where they want to go (orientation). O&M skill instruction also equips a student carry out a plan to get where they want to go (mobility). O&M skills are taught only by a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist. O&M skills should begin to be developed in infancy starting with basic body awareness and movement continuing on into adulthood. The student will learn skills that allow them to navigate the world efficiently, effectively and safely.
What skills are taught through O&M?	O&M skill training is individualized and may include the following: *Sensory Integration Techniques (Medicaid Procedure Code 97533)* enhance sensory processing and promote adaptive responses to the environment: *Sensory Awareness* includes gaining information about the world through hearing, touch, smell and proprioception. *Spatial Concepts* incorporates the relationships that exist between objects in the environment and that objects exist even if not felt or heard. *Searching Skills* to be able to locate items or places efficiently. *Independent Movement* within an environment includes crawling, rolling, walking. *Sighted Guide Techniques* to receive assistance from another individual during travel. *Cane Skills* incorporates various cane techniques to identify a clear path of travel. *Self-Care and Home Management* training (Medicaid Procedure Code 97535). Those tasks may include activities of daily living (ADLs); lighting assessments as well as recommendation and instruction for effective use of assistive devices.
Where do O&M services take place?	O&M skill instruction is highly individualized and is intended to equip a student with a skill set to be as independent as possible. Thus instruction may take place within the home setting, in the community, in public spaces; or if authorized on a student's education plan, the instruction may take place in school. The O&M Specialist strongly encourages professionals involved with the student to observe and learn the O&M skills and related language to support on-going use of learned skills.
What is a primary goal of O&M?	A primary goal of O&M is to equip students with a visual impairment the ability to achieve independent movement to as great a degree as possible. Most students who have low vision or blindness are able to learn routes in familiar environments by utilizing various clues and landmarks to provide orientation. With O&M training any student has the potential to travel independently.
How are O&M services paid for?	Effective July 1, 2013, Montana Medicaid will pay for a portion of Orientation & Mobility instruction provided by a Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist to Medicaid eligible students age birth through 21 whose IEP includes O&M instruction.
Who refers students for O&M services?	Parents, legal guardians, early intervention family support specialists, medical providers, teachers, case managers, special education directors, Vision Outreach Consultants from Montana School for the Deaf & the Blind, or any service provider may provide a referral directly to MILP.

What is the reimbursement process for O&M services?	***School Age through Twenty (21) Years*** **Public School, Learning Co-operative:** If an eligible student has O&M services defined on their Individualized Education Plan (IEP), MILP may be considered by the school as a possible contracted provider. MILP will supply a contract outlining the provision of O&M services which will meet the expectations outlined in the student's IEP. Once the contract is signed by the appropriate school district representative, O&M services will begin. ➢ MILP supplies the School with an invoice for the O&M service provided. ➢ School pays MILP per the invoice received and contract agreement. ➢ School* bills Medicaid for the O&M instruction of Medicaid eligible students, using the appropriate codes and rates associated with the school provider type. ***Summer Instruction:*** see below *Community Instruction* ***Home School:*** The home school student's family or legal guardian may contact MILP to arrange for O&M skill instruction. MILP will draft an agreement outlining the provision of services and payment arrangements. Once this agreement has been signed, O&M services will begin. ➢ If the student *is* Medicaid eligible – MILP will bill Medicaid directly for O&M services. ➢ If the student is *not* Medicaid eligible – MILP will bill the family/legal guardian the pre-determined fee for service amount. ***Community Instruction:*** The entire world is the classroom for a student with a visual impairment. O&M instruction may occur anywhere the student and family may go. For example the city park, mall, day camps, grocery store, ride the city bus, walk from home to the corner store or bus stop, etc. Coordination of community instruction takes place between the student's family and the O&M Specialist. ➢ MILP bills Medicaid directly. ➢ EXCEPTION: If Community Instruction is part of school sponsored services such as a field trip – School will bill Medicaid just as if the services were provided "in" the school.
What about confidentiality?	All information obtained from the referral, assessment and provision of service delivery process is held in strict confidence. Information about the individual is important to the mutual planning for services. MILP employs a Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist who adheres to a strict code of ethics. All individuals, and/or their representative, receiving services from MILP will be provided a copy of MILP's Notice of Privacy Practices.
Who can I contact regarding O&M services?	**Montana Independent Living Project** **1-800-735-6457** **1-406-442-5755** **www.milp.us**