



Related MLN Matters Article #: MM5665

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Revised Information on Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Scan Coding

Key Words

MM5565, CR5565, R1301CP, PET, Scan

Provider Types Affected

Physicians and providers who bill Medicare carriers, Fiscal Intermediaries (FIs), and Part A/B Medicare Administrative Contractors (A/B MACs) for PET scan services for Medicare beneficiaries

Key Points

- The effective date of the instruction is:
 - January 28, 2005, for Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) code 78609 non-coverage and
 - January 1, 2008, for Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) code A4641 non-applicable for PET scans.
- The implementation date is January 7, 2008.
- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) recently learned there is incorrect information regarding CPT code 78609 (PET for brain perfusion imaging) and HCPCS code A4641 in the following documents:
 - The *Medicare Claims Processing Manual*, Chapter 13 (Radiology Services), Section 60.3.1 (Appropriate CPT Codes Effective for PET scans for Services Performed on or After January 28, 2005), and Section 60.3.2 (Tracer Codes Required for PET scans) and
 - Change Request (CR) 3741 (transmittal 527, dated April 15, 2005).
- In Section 60.3.1, CPT code 78609 is incorrectly listed as a covered service by Medicare.
- In Section 60.3.2, CPT code 78609 is incorrectly included in terms of the applicability of certain tracer codes. Similarly, Section 60.3.2 incorrectly lists HCPCS code A4641 as an applicable tracer for PET scans.

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- CR5665 corrects these errors. It updates the manual by removing HCPCS code 78609 from the list of covered codes and HCPCS code A4641 from the list of applicable tracer codes for PET scans and corrects the erroneous information in CR3741.

Notes: All PET scan services (codes 78459, 78491, 78492, 78608, and 78811 through 78816) require the use of a radiopharmaceutical diagnostic imaging agent (tracer). Therefore, the applicable tracer code should always be used when billing for a PET scan service.

Key implementation points in CR5665

- Effective January 28, 2005, CPT code 78609 became a non-covered service for Medicare. Carriers, FIs, and A/B MACS will deny claims submitted with CPT code 78609 on or after January 28, 2005.
- When denying these claims, they will use:
 - Medicare Summary Notice 16.10: "Medicare does not pay for this item or service";
 - Claim Adjustment Reason Code 96: "Non-covered charge"; and
 - Remittance Advice Remark Codes N386: "This decision was based on a National Coverage Determination (NCD)." An NCD provides a determination as to whether a particular item or service is covered.
- Effective January 1, 2008, HCPCS code A4641 is not an applicable tracer for PET scans. Providers should not report HCPCS code A4641 when submitting claims for PET scans for services on or after January 1, 2008.
- Instead, as January 1, 2008, when submitting claims for PET scans containing CPT code 78491 or 78492, providers should use only tracer code A9555 or A9526. When submitting claims for PET scans containing CPT code 78459, 78608, or 78811 through 78816, providers should use only tracer code A9552 (see Table 2 on page 4 of MLN Matters article MM5665).
- Carriers, FIs, and A/B MACs will not search for claims that have been paid prior to the implementation date. They will adjust claims brought to their attention.
- The currently covered PET scan CPT codes (on or after January 28, 2005) and tracer HCPCS codes (as of January 1, 2008) are listed in Tables 1 and 2 on pages 3 through 5 of MM5665.

Important Links

The related MLN Matters article can be found at

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/MM5665.pdf> on the CMS website.

The official instruction (CR5665) regarding this change may be viewed at

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/Transmittals/downloads/R1301CP.pdf> on the CMS website. The updated *Medicare Claims Processing Manual*, Chapter 13, Section 60.3.1 and Section 60.3.2 are attached.

Providers may view CR3741 at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/Transmittals/downloads/R527CP.pdf> on the CMS website. The related MLN Matters article (3741) may be viewed at

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/mm3741.pdf> on the CMS website.

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If providers have questions regarding this issue, they may contact their carrier, FI, or A/B MAC at their toll-free number, which may be found at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/CallCenterTollNumDirectory.zip> on the CMS website.