

MLN Matters Number: MM4351

Related Change Request (CR) #: 4351

Related CR Release Date: March 24, 2006

Effective Date: March 21, 2006

Related CR Transmittal #: R894CP and R49NCD

Implementation Date: April 3, 2006

Note: This article was updated on October 26, 2012, to reflect current Web addresses. All other information remains unchanged.

Microvolt T-wave Alternans (MTWA) Diagnostic Testing

Provider Types Affected

Physicians, suppliers, and providers billing Medicare carriers and/or fiscal intermediaries (FIs) for MTWA diagnostic testing services

Provider Action Needed

This article is based on Change Request (CR) 4351, which announces that effective for dates of service on or after March 21, 2006, MTWA diagnostic testing is covered for the evaluation of patients at risk of sudden cardiac death (SCD), only when the spectral analysis method is used.

Background

MTWA testing is a non-invasive diagnostic test that detects minute electrical activity in a portion of the electrocardiogram (EKG) known as the T-wave. The test is performed by placing highly sensitive electrodes on a patient's chest prior to a period of controlled exercise.

These electrodes detect very small beat-to-beat voltage fluctuations (on the order of one-millionth of volt) in the EKG T-wave. Spectral analysis (a sensitive mathematical method of measuring and comparing time and the EKG signals) is then used to calculate these minute voltage changes. Computer software then analyzes these microvolt changes and produces a report to be interpreted by a physician.

Within patient groups that may be considered candidates for Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD) therapy, published literature indicates that a negative MTWA test may be useful in identifying low-risk patients who are unlikely to benefit from, and who may experience worse outcomes from, ICD placement.

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Effective for services performed on or after March 21, 2006, the following Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) code will be recognized as nationally payable for MTWA diagnostic testing.

CPT Code	Descriptor	CPT Code
93025	MTWA for assessment of ventricular arrhythmias	93025

This is a national coverage determination (NCD) made under section 1862(a)(1) of the Social Security Act (the Act). NCDs are binding on all carriers, FIs, quality improvement organizations, health maintenance organizations, competitive medical plans, health care prepayment plans, the Medicare Appeals Council, and administrative law judges (ALJs) (see 42 CFR section 405.1064, effective May 1, 2005).

An NCD that expands coverage is also binding on a Medicare Advantage Organization. In addition, an ALJ may not review an NCD. (See section 1869(f)(1)(A)(i) of the Act.)

Notes: MTWA diagnostic testing is non-covered for the evaluation of patients at risk for SCD if measurement is not performed employing the spectral analysis method.

Prior to March 21, 2006, MTWA diagnostic testing was covered at local carrier/FI discretion. Carrier/FI discretion is no longer applicable.

Additional Information

For complete details, please see the official instruction (CR4351) issued to your carrier/FI regarding this change. There are two parts to CR4351, transmittal R894CP, which includes the Medicare claims processing instructions at <http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Transmittals/downloads/R894CP.pdf> and transmittal R49NCD, which includes the National Coverage Determination Manual revision at <http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Transmittals/downloads/R49NCD.pdf> on the CMS site.

If you have questions, please contact your carrier/FI at their toll-free number, which may be found at <http://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Monitoring-Programs/provider-compliance-interactive-map/index.html> on the CMS website.

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