

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services



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Medicare Coverage of Diagnostic Testing for Zika Virus

Provider Types Affected

This MLN Matters® Article is intended for physicians, providers, and clinical diagnostic laboratories who submit claims to Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs) for services to Medicare beneficiaries.

Provider Action Needed

This MLN Matters Special Edition Article informs the public that Medicare covers Zika virus testing under Medicare Part B as long as the clinical diagnostic laboratory test is reasonable and necessary for the diagnosis or treatment of a person's illness or injury. This article reminds laboratories furnishing Zika virus tests to contact their MACs for guidance on the appropriate billing codes to use on claims for Zika virus testing. Furthermore, laboratories should provide resources and cost information as may be requested by the MACs in order for the MACs to establish appropriate payment amounts for the tests.

Background

On February 1, 2016, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Zika virus a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)¹. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Zika virus disease is a nationally notifiable condition that has caused outbreaks in many countries and territories. The virus is primarily

¹ United States. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016) About Zika Virus. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/about/index.html>.

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spread through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito, although other modes of transmission include mother-to-child transmission, blood transfusion and sexual transmission.² Currently there are a few diagnostic tests that can determine the presence of the virus. These tests are available through the CDC and CDC-approved state health laboratories. A small number of tests have been issued an Emergency Use Authorization by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and may be available through commercial laboratories.

Medicare Part B pays for clinical diagnostic laboratory tests that are reasonable and necessary for the diagnosis or treatment of a person's illness or injury. Presently there are no specific HCPCS codes for testing of the Zika virus; however, laboratories should contact their local MACs for guidance on the appropriate billing codes to use on claims for Zika virus testing. Furthermore, laboratories should provide resources and cost information as may be requested by the MACs in order for the MACs to establish appropriate payment amounts for the tests.

Additional Information

If you have any questions, please contact your MAC at their toll-free number. That number is available at <http://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNMattersArticles/index.html> under - How Does It Work.

More information is available in the "Clinical Laboratory Fee Schedule: Payment System Series" at <https://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNProducts/Downloads/Clinical-Laboratory-Fee-Schedule-Fact-Sheet-ICN006818.pdf> and in the "CY 2016 Clinical Laboratory Fee Schedule; 16CLAB" at <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/ClinicalLabFeeSched/clinlab.html>.

² United States. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016) *Zika Virus*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/about/index.html> .

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