



News Flash – On June 9, 2009, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) conducted a national provider conference call on the HIPAA Versions 5010 and D.O. You can view the presentation, transcript and listen to the audiofile from that call by accessing http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/HIPAA-Administrative-Simplification/Versions5010andD0/downloads/6-9-2009_National_Provider_Call.pdf on the CMS website.

MLN Matters® Number: MM6578

Related Change Request (CR) #: 6578

Related CR Release Date: August 7, 2009

Effective Date: May 12, 2009

Related CR Transmittal #: R105NCD

Implementation Date: September 8, 2009

Note: This article was updated on January 3, 2013, to reflect current Web addresses. All other information remains unchanged.

Screening Computed Tomography Colonography (CTC) for Colorectal Cancer

Provider Types Affected

Physicians and providers submitting claims to Medicare contractors (carriers, Fiscal Intermediaries (FIs), and/or A/B Medicare Administrative Contractors (A/B MACs)) for colorectal cancer screening services provided to Medicare beneficiaries.

Provider Action Needed

This article is based on Change Request (CR) 6578 which instructs that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has determined that current evidence is inadequate to conclude that Computed Tomography Colonography (CTC) is an appropriate colorectal cancer screening test under section 1861(pp)(1) of the Social Security Act (the Act). Therefore, effective May 12, 2009, CTC for colorectal cancer screening, also known as virtual colonoscopy, remains nationally non-covered by Medicare. Medicare contractors will continue to process claims for CTC for colorectal cancer screening without change.

Disclaimer

This article was prepared as a service to the public and is not intended to grant rights or impose obligations. This article may contain references or links to statutes, regulations, or other policy materials. The information provided is only intended to be a general summary. It is not intended to take the place of either the written law or regulations. We encourage readers to review the specific statutes, regulations and other interpretive materials for a full and accurate statement of their contents.

Background

Medicare covers colorectal cancer screening for average-risk individuals age 50 and older using:

- Fecal occult blood testing,
- Sigmoidoscopy,
- Colonoscopy, and
- Barium enema.

On March 5, 2008, the American Cancer Society, the US Multi Society Task Force on Colorectal Cancer, and the American College of Radiology issued new cancer screening guidelines, including a recommendation that CTC be considered an acceptable option for colorectal cancer screening for such individuals. CTC (also referred to as virtual colonoscopy) uses computed tomography (CT) to acquire images and advanced 2-dimensional (2D) or 3-dimensional (3D) image display techniques for interpretation.

Neither Medicare law nor regulations identify the CTC test as a possible coverage option under the colorectal cancer screening benefit. However, under 42 CFR 410.37(a)(1) CMS is allowed to use the National Coverage Determination (NCD) process to determine coverage of other types of colorectal cancer screening tests that are not specifically identified in law or regulations as it determines to be appropriate, in consultation with appropriate organizations.

Following a thorough review of the evidence, meetings with medical professional organizations, and conducting a Medicare Evidence Development and Coverage Advisory Committee Meeting, **CMS has determined that the current evidence is inadequate to conclude that CTC is an appropriate colorectal cancer screening test** under the Act (section 1861(pp)(1); see http://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/ssact/title18/1861.htm on the Internet).

Additional Information

The official instruction, CR 6578, issued to your carrier, FI, and A/B MAC regarding this change may be viewed at <http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Transmittals/downloads/R105NCD.pdf> on the CMS website. If you have any questions, please contact your carrier, FI, or A/B MAC 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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Providers may also be interested in the Medicare Learning Network brochure on Cancer Screenings that is available for download at http://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNProducts/downloads/Cancer_Screening.pdf on the CMS website.

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