

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



**MLN Connects™ National Provider Call: National Partnership to Improve Dementia Care in Nursing Homes - Tuesday, December 9; 1:30-3pm ET** -During this MLN Connects Call, speakers will discuss innovative efforts from State-based Alzheimer's Association Chapters related to train-the-trainer programs, as well as the implementation of the Comfort First Approach in nursing homes. CMS subject matter experts will provide National Partnership updates and discuss next steps for the initiative. [Register](#) or visit the [December 9](#) call web page for more information.

MLN Matters® Number: MM8881

Related Change Request (CR) #: CR 8881

Related CR Release Date: October 17, 2014

Effective Date: January 27, 2014

Related CR Transmittal #: R3096CP,  
R176NCD, and R196BP

Implementation Date: November 18, 2014

**Medicare Coverage of Ultrasound Screening for Abdominal Aortic Aneurysms (AAA) and Screening Fecal-Occult Blood Tests (FOBT)**

**Provider Types Affected**

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This MLN Matters® Article is intended for physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and clinical nurse specialists submitting claims to Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs) for ultrasound screening for Abdominal Aortic Aneurysms (AAA) and screening fecal-occult blood tests (FOBT) ordered for Medicare beneficiaries.

**Provider Action Needed**

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Effective for dates of service on and after January 27, 2014, MACs shall pay claims for ultrasound screening for AAA and screening FOBTs, per the modified requirements in 42 CFR 410.19 and 410.37. See the details of the changes in the Background section below. Make sure that your billing staffs are aware of these changes.

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## Background

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Medicare Part B coverage of screening FOBTs and ultrasound screening for AAA is covered for certain beneficiaries that meet eligibility requirements as described in regulations. As part of the CY 2014 Physician Fee Schedule rule, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) revised the Medicare Part B coverage requirements for Ultrasound Screening for AAA (42 CFR 410.19) and Screening FOBT (42 CFR 410.37).

As a result of CR8881, the following policy changes are effective for dates of service on and after January 27, 2014:

- **Ultrasound Screening for AAA:** Coverage of AAA screening is modified by eliminating the one year time limit with respect to the referral for this service. This modification allows coverage of AAA screening for eligible beneficiaries without requiring them to receive a referral as part of the Initial Preventive Physical Examination (IPPE, also commonly known as the “Welcome to Medicare Preventive Visit”). The beneficiary need only obtain a referral from their physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, or clinical nurse specialist. All other coverage requirements for this service remain unchanged, per 42 CFR 410.19.
- **Screening FOBTs:** In addition to the beneficiary’s attending physician, the beneficiary’s attending physician assistant, nurse practitioner, or clinical nurse specialist may furnish written orders for screening FOBTs, per section 42 CFR 410.37(b). All other coverage requirements for this service remains unchanged, per 42 CFR 410.37.

## Additional Information

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The official instruction, CR 8881, consists of three transmittals issued to your MAC. These transmittals update the "Medicare Claims Processing Manual", the Medicare Benefit Policy Manual", and the "Medicare National Coverage Determinations Manual". These transmittals are available at <http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Transmittals/Downloads/R3096CP.pdf>, <http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Transmittals/Downloads/R196BP.pdf>, and <http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Transmittals/Downloads/R176NCD.pdf>, respectively.

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-Net/work-MLN/MLNMattersArticles/index.html> under - How Does It Work.

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