
PROGRAM MEMORANDUM CARRIERS

Department of Health
and Human Services

Health Care Financing
Administration

Transmittal No. B-00-31

Date JUNE 2000

CHANGE REQUEST 1210

SUBJECT: Use of CPT Code 33999 for Transmyocardial Revascularization (TMR)

Medicare national coverage policy for TMR includes coverage for TMR when performed at the same time as a thoracotomy for other purposes. TMR is described under CPT code 33140 as "Transmyocardial Laser Revascularization, by thoracotomy (separate procedure)."

This CPT code was specifically developed for TMR as a separate procedure, and the physician work and practice expense Relative Value Units (RVUs) were based on this assumption. In calendar year (CY) 2001, a new CPT code will be effective that describes TMR as an add-on to thoracotomies performed for other reasons. It will have physician work and practice expense RVUs based on its status as an add-on procedure. Therefore, it is not appropriate to report CPT code 33140 when TMR is performed as an add-on to a thoracotomy.

For CY 2000, there is no CPT code which is appropriate for coding TMR as an add-on procedure. Therefore, we are advising physicians to use CPT code 33999 ("Unlisted procedure cardiac surgery") when coding TMR as an add-on to a thoracotomy. This code is carrier priced.

The effective date for this Program Memorandum (PM) is July 1, 2000.

The implementation date for this PM is July 1, 2000.

These instructions should be implemented within your current operating budget.

This PM may be discarded after July 1, 2001.

For questions related to payment, please contact Paul W. Kim at (410) 786-7410.

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