

June 22, 2023

Dear Provider:

Effective for dates of service on and after September 10, 2023, the following updates are applied to the Carelon Radiology Clinical Appropriateness Guidelines (formerly AIM Specialty Health Guidelines).

As part of the annual Carelon guideline review process, these updates are focused on advancing efforts to drive clinically appropriate, safe, and affordable health care services.

Imaging of the Extremities

- Shoulder arthroplasty – clarified that MRI should not be used for preoperative assessment of bone stock and bone version (CT only)

Imaging of the Spine

- Spinal infection – added criterion for imaging in patients at risk for infection based on American College of Radiology (ACR) appropriateness criteria
- Radiculopathy – added indication for CT when being done as a myelogram, based on ACR appropriateness criteria and feedback from subject matter experts

Vascular Imaging

- Vascular anatomic delineation prior to procedures – removed exclusions for coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) and open valve replacement/repair
- Vascular anatomic delineation prior to transcatheter aortic valve implantation (TAVI/TAVE) – allowed CT chest as an alternative to CTA
- Stenosis or occlusion of extracranial carotid arteries – limited screening for patients with incidentally detected carotid calcification to those undergoing preoperative evaluation for cardiac surgery; modified criteria for management of known stenosis to allow follow-up per American College of Cardiology guidelines
- Pulmonary hypertension – clarified that criteria are applicable to all causes, not just pulmonary arterial hypertension
- Unexplained hypotension – removed indication as it is more appropriate for inpatient management
- Peripheral arterial disease – removed cilostazol as prerequisite therapy; added baseline evaluation and surveillance indications following endovascular revascularization
- Popliteal artery aneurysm – added diagnosis and management indications; added surveillance for unrepaired aneurysms to align with Society for Vascular Surgery guidelines

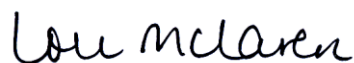
SPECT Imaging

- SPECT Bone imaging for spondylolysis – added indication for nondiagnostic findings on imaging other than radiographs
- SPECT Leukocyte scintigraphy – added indication for evaluation of suspected vascular graft or endograft infection, based on new EANM guideline

For questions related to guidelines, or changes please contact Carelon by email at MedicalBenefitsManagement.guidelines@Carelton.com.

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions regarding this notice, feel free to contact your provider relations consultant. If you are not sure who that is, please email providerrelations@bcbsvt.com or call (888) 449-0443 option 1 and you will be directed to the appropriate person. Business hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., except holidays.

Sincerely,



Lou McLaren
Director, Provider Services