

Medicare Reimbursement Update

by Michael Becker, General Manager, Global Reimbursement, GE Healthcare



At GE Healthcare, we recognize the significant impact that recent developments in reimbursement for diagnostic imaging procedures may have on our customers. In the last few months alone, many new policies have been introduced, including the following.

- Multiple Imaging Procedure Payment Discount**
 On January 1, The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the federal agency that administers the Medicare program, implemented a policy to discount payments for certain imaging procedures performed by non-hospital outpatient providers.
- Coding Changes for 3-Dimensional Rendering Procedures**
 Effective January 1, the American Medical Association (AMA) revised the CPT codes for 3-D rendering procedures. Medicare and other payers have established new payment rates for these codes and some restrictions apply.
- New Codes for Coronary CT Procedures**
 Effective January 1, 2006, the AMA introduced new CPT Category III codes to report a number of coronary CT procedures. Category III codes often require specific reporting requirements to be followed by providers submitting claims for these procedures.

As we look to 2007, we anticipate that a number of other important changes may impact reimbursement for diagnostic imaging services. These include payment reductions for

imaging procedures imposed by the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005; expansion of the multiple imaging procedure payment discount policy; application of the Stark Law to Nuclear Medicine services (including PET); and revisions to Medicare's practice expense calculations.

GE Healthcare is committed to providing its customers with accurate, reliable and timely information to help you navigate these changes and prepare for emerging developments. We urge you to visit our reimbursement website at www.gehealthcare.com/reimbursement for up-to-date information and analysis.

Here are some of the features you'll find on the website (See Table 1). As always, your GE Healthcare Account Representative is available to assist you as well. ■

Table 1.

Reimbursement Information –

Helps you understand and prepare for key developments affecting payment for imaging services.

Contrast Agent and Radiopharmaceutical Reimbursement –

Links you to GE Healthcare Medical Diagnostics customer support and documentation for coding and reimbursement related to the contrast agent and radiopharmaceutical products offered by the company.

Medicare Payment Rates –

An on-line, interactive application that calculates Medicare payment rates for selected imaging procedures for Hospital Outpatient or Freestanding Imaging Centers based on your geographic location.

Customer Advisories –

Provides detailed information on coding, coverage and payment amounts for specific imaging services like Cardiac CT and 3-Dimensional Rendering procedures. Also, there are Frequently Asked Questions type advisories to help you understand complex reimbursement policies like Stark Law and Medicare's Multiple Imaging Procedure Discount.

Pro Formas –

Helps you estimate the financial impact of purchasing some GE Healthcare imaging equipment and services. Customer ROI tools for some modalities like Magnetic Resonance and Computed Tomography are available through a GE Healthcare Sales Specialist or Representative.

Medicare payment rates available at: www.gehealthcare.com/reimbursement