



WellPath

Questions and Answers

Frequently Asked Questions

Q.1 Is pre-certification required for emergency situations?

A.1 No. Patients who are directed to the Emergency Room or Urgent Care Facility are exempt from pre-certification. It is not necessary for anyone to call NIA retrospectively to authorize any imaging procedure performed during an Emergency Room visit. Providers are still required to obtain pre-certification for observation and inpatient imaging procedures by calling WellPath at 800-708-9355. This program excludes WellPath self-funded membership (such as GEHA).

Q.2 What kind of response time can ordering physicians expect for pre-certification?

A.2 The best way to increase the possibility of having a pre-certification approved on line through www.RadMD.com or at the time of the first call through the toll-free number is to have knowledge of the case including:

- The patient's history and diagnosis
- Reason for the study
- Findings on physical examination
- Results of previous imaging studies, and
- History of medical or surgical treatment

Approximately 70 percent of the pre-certifications are approved on line or during the initial phone call. Generally, within 2 business days after receipt of request, a determination will be made. In certain cases, the review process can take longer if additional clinical information is required to make a determination.

Q.3 Where can I find NIA's Guidelines for Clinical Use of Diagnostic Imaging Examinations?

A.3 NIA's Diagnostic Imaging Guidelines for clinical use of examinations can be found on NIA's Web site at www.RadMD.com.

Q.4 Can NIA handle multiple pre-certification requests per contact?

A.4 Yes.

Q.5 Why is NIA asking for a date of service during pre-certification? Do physicians have to obtain pre-certification before they call to schedule an appointment?

A.5 At the end of the pre-certification process, NIA asks where the procedure is being performed and the anticipated date of service. The exact date of service is not required. Rendering providers should ensure pre-certification has been obtained before scheduling the patient.

Q.6 How long is a certification valid?

A.6 The certification is valid for 30 days. When a procedure is certified, NIA will use the date of the final determination as the starting point for the 30 day period in which the examination must be completed.

Q.7 What if my office staff forgets to contact NIA and then goes ahead to schedule an imaging procedure requiring pre-certification?

A.7 It is important to notify office staff and educate them about this new policy. This policy will be effective August 1st, 2010. Claims for CT/CTA/CCTA, MRI/MRA, PET Scans, Nuclear Cardiology and Diagnostic Nuclear Medicine procedures that are not pre-certified will not be paid, and the members must be held harmless. Please note that the rendering facility may refuse to schedule the study until a certification has been obtained.

Q.8 Can the rendering facility obtain pre-certification in the event of an urgent test?

A.8 Yes. If they begin the process, NIA will follow-up with the ordering physician to complete the process.

Q.9 What does the NIA certification number look like?

A.9 The NIA certification number consists of 8 or 9 alpha-numeric characters.

Q.10 If two certification numbers are associated with the patient encounter, which one should be printed on the claim?

A.10 Either of the two certification numbers should appear on the claim form. The certification number not entered on the claim form will be captured internally within the claims system.

Q.11 Is pre-certification needed for a CT-guided biopsy?

A.11 No, these do not require pre-certification.

Q.12 Which PET scans require pre-certification?

A.12 All outpatient PET Scans require pre-certification through NIA.

Q.13 What happens if a patient is pre-certified for a CT of the abdomen, and the radiologist or rendering physician feels an additional study of the pelvis is needed?

A.13 The radiologist or rendering physician should proceed with the pelvic study. If this occurs, either the radiologist or rendering physician can call NIA with the information and clinical rationale to begin the process and NIA will follow-up with the ordering physician to complete the process or he/she should notify the patient's ordering physician of the additional test on the same day, as a matter of courtesy and appropriate medical procedure. The original ordering physician should then call NIA after the study is provided to proceed with the normal review process and obtain an additional certification number.

Q.14 If a patient needs a CT in preparation for radiation therapy, is pre-certification necessary?

A.14 No, these do not require pre-certification.

Q.15 Is pre-certification necessary when WellPath is not the member's primary insurance?

A.15 Yes. Pre-certification is necessary even when WellPath is secondary.

Q.16 Can a chiropractor order images?

A.16 Yes.

Q.17 How are procedures that do not require NIA pre-certification handled?

A.17 These should be handled as outlined in the WellPath Provider Manual.

Q.18 If requesting pre-certification through NIA's Web site and the request pends, what happens next?

A.18 You will receive a tracking number and NIA will contact you to complete the process.

Q.19 Can RadMD be used to request retrospective or expedited requests?

A.19 No, those requests will need to be called into NIA's Call Center for processing.

Q.20 Can I speak directly with a Clinical Reviewer or Physician (Peer-to-Peer) Level Reviewer?

A.20 Yes. Once the initial intake process is complete, you may request to be transferred to the clinical level of review. Initial intake information is necessary to determine member eligibility and to process the request.

Q.21 What steps will the ordering physician take when the certification is not provided during the intake process (Level 1)?

A.21 The case will be forwarded to NIA's clinical departments who will review the clinical information submitted. If needed, the clinical staff will request via fax, additional clinical information. This information can be faxed to NIA's dedicated clinical fax line. An ordering office might request a hot transfer to a nurse clinical reviewer (Level 2) during intake, however, this should only be requested if the office has a clinician who can speak with NIA's nurses and have additional clinical information that would support the requested study.

If the pre-certification is still pending at the end of the initial call, it is not necessary for the ordering physician's office to remain on the line. If the pre-certification still does not meet clinical criteria at the nurse review level, it will be

escalated to physician review (Level 3). At that point, the NIA physician may ask for more clinical information or request to have a peer discussion with the ordering physician.

Q.22 If NIA does not certify an imaging study, do we have the option to appeal the decision?

A.22 Yes, through normal appeal procedures as directed in the denial letter. If a physician does not agree with the decision made by NIA, the physician should request an appeal of the decision.

Q.23 Can facility access information on an approved pre-certification?

A.23 Yes, approved pre-certifications can be viewed on www.RadMD.com. On the right side of the home page is a section where the facility may log on and check the status of the pre-certification. The facility may search based on the patient's ID number, patient name, or by the certification number (if known).