



Talking Points

Cardiac Studies for Southern Health Members

Why do some cardiac-related studies now require preauthorization?

Preauthorization is required to minimize radiation exposure and promote non-invasive testing when appropriate. Cardiac CT Angiography (CCTA) technology is now covered under the cardiac-imaging management program because it is less invasive than tests such as cardiac catheterization. Other cardiac studies such as nuclear cardiology and stress echocardiography are also part of the program.

When does the program begin?

The Southern Health program begins April 1, 2010. We will work with you and your office staff to ensure that you are prepared for the launch of this program.

How does the program work?

Southern Health cardiac-imaging management program assesses imaging technologies used to diagnose and monitor patients with coronary artery disease in nonemergent cases. The program takes a comprehensive approach to determine if a recommended test is the proper next step in diagnosing coronary artery disease or if another test is more appropriate.

What cardiac-related imaging procedures are included in the Southern Health program?

The program includes:

- Nuclear cardiology/MPI
- Cardiac CT Angiography (CCTA)
- Stress echocardiography
- PET
- CT
- MRI/MRA

What additional services are provided?

- Coverage of CCTA as a diagnostic tool for coronary artery disease
- Evidence-based algorithms to help identify the best diagnostic options for each patient
- Physician consultations with cardiologists for elective cardiac diagnostic imaging (echo stress, nuclear cardiology/MPI and CCTA)
- Access to a network of imaging providers who meet the highest technical and professional standards

What do ordering providers need to do?

Ordering providers need to get preauthorization for:

- Nuclear cardiology/MPI
- Cardiac CT angiography (CCTA)
- Stress echocardiography
- PET
- CT
- MRI/MRA

KEY PROVISIONS:

- Emergency room imaging procedures do not require authorization.
- This program excludes Southern Health self-funded membership.
- Providers are still required to obtain prior authorization for observation and inpatient imaging procedures by contacting Southern Health at 800-235-2206.

What do imaging providers need to do to participate in the program?

If you perform any of the diagnostic services in the program, you must complete a Privileging Application to be reimbursed for these procedures for Southern Health members. The application is available at www.RadMD.com. For more information, call the NIA Provider Assessment Department at 888-972-9642. A critical component of the program is to ensure that all imaging providers meet minimum standards for the technical and professional components of these services.

Who will administer clinical oversight of this program?

The program is designed by physicians for physicians. Board-certified cardiologists work with community-based physicians to develop evidence-based clinical algorithms that determine the best available diagnostic pathway (including stress echocardiography, nuclear stress/MPI, and CCTA). These board-certified cardiologists also consult with referring physicians to apply these algorithms to a patient's specific symptoms and medical history. By determining the most appropriate clinical imaging protocol for each patient, we can reduce duplicative testing, minimize patient radiation exposure, avoid indication drift, shorten diagnosis time, and improve the overall health care experience.

Is there anything I should be doing before the program begins?

If you haven't done so already, please take a few minutes to register on www.RadMD.com. This portal gives you the most expedient way to process your imaging requests. You often will see immediate approvals without the need for telephone conversations.

What can a patient/member expect?

Physicians now have another option for diagnosing coronary artery disease, and that translates to achieving an accurate diagnosis as quickly as possible with the fewest number of tests and the least amount of radiation.

What kind of support is available for patients through the program?

The principles of the program are consumer engagement and support, ensuring patients have the information and tools to become more involved in their health care decisions. This

includes printed and web-based materials, which will be available before and after the program launch.