



Wellcare (Medicare) Interventional Pain Management (IPM) Program Quick Reference Guide for Ordering Providers

Effective: August 1, 2021

Wellcare expanded its partnership with National Imaging Associates, Inc. (NIA) to provide utilization management for Interventional Pain Management (IPM) services on behalf of Wellcare. This program includes prior authorization for non-emergent outpatient IPM services for Wellcare membership. This decision is consistent with industry-wide efforts to ensure clinically appropriate quality of care and to manage the increasing utilization of these services.

NIA manages non-emergent outpatient IPM procedures through the existing contractual relationships with Wellcare.

Outpatient IPM Procedures Requiring Prior Authorization Include:

- Spinal Epidural Injections
- Paravertebral Facet Joint Injections or Blocks
- Paravertebral Facet Joint Denervation (Radiofrequency (RF) Neurolysis)
- Sacroiliac Joint Injections
- Sympathetic Nerve Block
- Spinal Cord Stimulators (Effective July 1, 2023)

If an urgent/emergent clinical situation exists outside of a hospital emergency room, please contact NIA immediately with the appropriate clinical information for an expedited review.

A separate prior authorization number is required for each procedure

Prior Authorization Process

The **preferred method** to submit prior authorization requests is through NIA's website <https://www.RadMD.com>. Providers that are unable to submit their request through RadMD or for urgent requests needing expedited review, providers may contact our Call Center at 1-800-424-5388.

Please refer to NIA's website <https://www.RadMD.com> to obtain the Wellcare/NIA Billable CPT® Codes Claim Resolution/Utilization Review Matrix for all of the CPT-4 codes that NIA authorizes on behalf of Wellcare.

As a provider of IPM services that require prior authorization, it is essential that you develop a process to ensure that the appropriate authorization number(s) has been obtained.

Payment will be denied for procedures performed without a prior authorization and the member cannot be balance-billed for such procedures.

IPM Important Notes:

- IPM procedures performed in the emergency room or on an inpatient basis do not require prior authorization through NIA.
- All outpatient IPM procedures require a prior authorization through NIA for each procedure performed.
- It is the responsibility of the ordering provider to obtain authorization for all IPM procedures outlined. Failure to do so may result in non-payment of your claim.
- Authorizations are valid for 60 days from the date of final determination.

Information Needed to Submit Prior Authorization Requests

To expedite the prior authorization process, please have the appropriate information available before logging into NIA's website, <https://www.RadMD.com> or calling NIA's Call Center at 1-800-424-5388.

(*denotes required information):

- Name and office phone number of ordering physician*
- Member name and ID number*
- Requested procedure*
- Name of provider office or facility where the service will be performed*
- Anticipated date of service*
- Details justifying the pain procedure*:
 - Date of onset of pain or exacerbation
 - Physician exam findings and member symptoms (including findings applicable to the requested services)
 - Clinical Diagnosis
 - Date and results of prior IPM procedures.
 - Diagnostic imaging results, *where available*. Conservative treatment modalities completed, duration, and results (e.g., physical therapy, chiropractic or osteopathic manipulation, hot pads, massage, ice packs and medication)

Please be prepared to upload or fax the following information, if requested:

- Clinical notes outlining onset of pain, conservative care modalities, outcomes and physical exam findings
- Date and results of prior IPM procedures
- Effectiveness of prior procedures on reducing pain
- Diagnostic Imaging results

Member symptoms, past clinical history and prior treatment information will be required and should be available at the time of the contact.

Website Access

- **To get started**, go to <https://www.RadMD.com>, click the New User button and submit a RadMD Application for New Account by selecting "**Physician's office that orders procedures.**" Your RadMD login information should not be shared.

- If a user already has access to RadMD to initiate authorizations, RadMD access will allow users to submit an authorization for any procedures/products managed by NIA.
- You can request prior authorization at <https://www.RadMD.com> by clicking the **Request Pain Management or Minimally Invasive Procedure** link which is a part of your main menu options. RadMD is available 24/7, except when maintenance is performed every third Thursday of the month from 9 pm – midnight PST.
- **Pended requests:** If you are requesting prior authorizations through the NIA website and your request pends, you will receive a tracking number. You will then be required to submit additional clinical information to complete the process.
- **Authorization status:** You can check on the status of prior authorizations quickly and easily by using the “View Request Status” link on RadMD’s main menu. In addition to the ability to view clinical documentation received by NIA, users can view links to case-specific communication to include requests for additional information and determination letters.
- The “Track an Authorization” feature will allow users who did not submit the original request to view the status of an authorization, as well as upload clinical information. This option is also available as a part of your main menu options using the “Search by Tracking Number” feature. A tracking number is required with this feature.

Telephone Access

- Call center hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST. You may obtain a prior authorization request by calling NIA at 1-800-424-5388.

Submitting Claims

Claims continue to go directly to Wellcare. Please send your claims for IPM procedures to the following address:

Wellcare Health Plans
 ATTN: Claims Department
 P.O. Box 31372
 Tampa, FL 33631-3372

Quick Contacts

- Website:
<https://www.RadMD.com>
- Toll Free Phone Number:
 1-800-424-5388

Providers are encouraged to use EDI claims submission.

Wellcare payor ID number is 14163.

Frequently Asked Questions

In this section NIA addresses commonly asked questions received from providers.

Where can I find NIA’s Guidelines for these IPM procedures?

Guidelines can be found on NIA’s website at <https://www.RadMD.com>.

Is prior authorization necessary if Wellcare is not the member’s primary insurance?

No. Authorization is not required if Wellcare is secondary to another plan.

What does the NIA authorization number look like?

The NIA authorization number consists of alpha/numeric characters (e.g., 1234X567). In some cases, the ordering physician may instead receive an NIA tracking number (not the same as an authorization number) if the physician's authorization request is not approved at the time of initial contact. Physicians can use either number to track the status of their request on the RadMD website or via our Interactive Voice Response telephone system.

Who can I contact at NIA for questions, complaints, and appeals, etc.?

Please use the following NIA contacts by type of issue:

- To educate your staff on NIA procedures and to assist you with any provider issues or concerns, contact your NIA Area Provider Relations Manager.
- Prior authorization and claims payment complaints/appeals: Follow the instructions on your non-authorization letter or Explanation of Benefit (EOB)/Explanation of Payment (EOP) notification.
- If you have questions or need more information about this IPM prior authorization program, you may contact the NIA Provider Service Line at: 1-800-327-0641.

How do referring/ordering physicians know who NIA is?

Wellcare and NIA coordinate outreach and orientation activities.

What does the member ID card look like? Does it have both NIA and Wellcare information on the card? Or is there two cards?

The Wellcare member ID card does not have NIA identifying information on it.