



# Wellcare Musculoskeletal Care Management (MSK) Program Quick Reference Guide for Physicians/Surgeons

April 01, 2024

Wellcare is committed to promoting continuous improvement of quality services for our members. Wellcare has entered an expanded partnership with National Imaging Associates, Inc. (NIA)<sup>1</sup>, to implement a new Musculoskeletal (MSK) Management program which will be effective April 01, 2024. The decision to implement this program is effective consistent with industry-wide efforts to ensure clinically appropriate quality of care and to manage the increasing utilization of these services. This program includes prior authorization for non-emergent MSK procedures: outpatient interventional spine pain management (IPM) services; and inpatient and outpatient hip, knee, shoulder, lumbar and cervical spine surgeries. The following types of services are included in the MSK program for all Wellcare Medicare members. Providers may begin contacting NIA on April 01, 2024, to obtain prior authorization for procedures scheduled on or after April 01, 2024.

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- Outpatient IPM
- Inpatient and outpatient hip surgeries
- Inpatient and outpatient knee surgeries
- Inpatient and outpatient shoulder surgeries
- Inpatient and outpatient lumbar and cervical spine surgeries

## Prior Authorization Implementation

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

It is the responsibility of the ordering physician/surgeon and rendering facility to ensure that prior authorization was obtained, when necessary. Payment will be denied for procedures performed without a prior authorization, including the MSK surgery hospital admission, and the member cannot be balance-billed for such procedures.

## Procedures Requiring Prior Authorization\*

### Outpatient and Inpatient Hip Surgeries: \*\*

- Revision/Conversion Hip Arthroplasty
- Total Hip Arthroplasty/Resurfacing

\*A separate prior authorization number is required for each procedure ordered.

<sup>1</sup>Effective 1/20/2023, National Imaging Associates, Inc. is now a subsidiary of Evolent Health. Evolent Health and its affiliates and subsidiaries collectively referred to as "Evolent."

- Femoroacetabular Impingement (FAI) Hip Surgery (includes CAM/pincer and labral repair)
- Hip Surgery – Other (includes synovectomy, loose body removal, debridement, diagnostic hip arthroscopy, and extra-articular arthroscopy)

**Outpatient and Inpatient Knee Surgeries: \*\***

- Revision Knee Arthroplasty
- Total Knee Arthroplasty (TKA)
- Partial-Unicompartmental Knee Arthroplasty (UKA)
- Knee Manipulation under Anesthesia (MUA)
- Knee Ligament Reconstruction/Repair
- Knee Meniscectomy/Meniscal Repair/Meniscal Transplant
- Knee Surgery – Other (includes synovectomy, loose body removal, diagnostic knee arthroscopy, debridement with or without chondroplasty, lateral release/patellar realignment, articular cartilage restoration)

\*\*Surgeon must request surgery authorization for each joint, even if bilateral joint surgery is to be performed on the same date.

**Outpatient and Inpatient Shoulder Surgeries: \*\***

- Revision Shoulder Arthroplasty
- Total/Reverse Arthroplasty or Resurfacing
- Partial Shoulder Arthroplasty/Hemiarthroplasty
- Shoulder Rotator Cuff Repair
- Shoulder Labral Repair
- Frozen Shoulder Repair/Adhesive Capsulitis
- Shoulder Surgery – Other (includes debridement, manipulation, decompression, tenotomy, tenodesis, synovectomy, claviclectomy, diagnostic shoulder arthroscopy)

**Outpatient and Inpatient Spine Surgeries:**

- Cervical Anterior Decompression with Fusion – Single and Multiple Levels
- Cervical Posterior Decompression with Fusion – Single and Multiple Levels
- Cervical Posterior Decompression (without fusion)
- Cervical Artificial Disc Replacement – Single and Two Levels
- Cervical Anterior Decompression (without fusion)
- Lumbar Microdiscectomy
- Lumbar Decompression (Laminotomy, Laminectomy, Facetomy and Foraminotomy)
- Lumbar Spine Fusion (Arthrodesis) With or Without Decompression – Single and Multiple Levels
- Lumbar Artificial Disc Replacement – Single and Two Levels
- Sacroiliac Joint Fusion

**Outpatient IPM Procedures:**

- Spinal Epidural Injections
- Paravertebral Facet Joint Injections or Blocks
- Paravertebral Facet Joint Denervation (Radiofrequency (RF) Neurolysis)
- Sacroiliac Joint Injections
- Sympathetic Nerve Blocks
- Spinal Cord Stimulators (Effective 4/1/2024)

NIA will manage the MSK program through existing contractual relationships with Wellcare. If an urgent/emergent clinical situation exists outside of a hospital emergency department, please contact NIA immediately with the appropriate clinical information for an expedited review. The number to call to initiate a prior authorization request is 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 the CPT-4 codes that NIA authorizes on behalf of Wellcare.

### **Prior Authorization Information**

To ensure that authorization numbers have been obtained, please adhere to the following guidelines.

#### **IPM:**

- Procedures performed in the emergency room or on an inpatient basis do not require prior authorization through Evolent.
- Outpatient IPM services managed by Evolent require a prior authorization for each procedure performed.
- It is the responsibility of the ordering physician to obtain authorization for all interventional pain management procedures outlined. Failure to do so may result in non-payment of your claim.
- Authorizations are valid for 30 days from the date of service.

#### **Outpatient and Inpatient MSK Surgeries:**

- Emergency musculoskeletal surgery (admitted via the Emergency Department) do not require prior authorization through NIA.
- Non-emergent outpatient and inpatient hip, knee, shoulder, and spine surgery services require prior authorization through NIA.
- **Note:** Facility admissions do not require a separate prior authorization. However, the facility should ensure that an NIA prior authorization has been obtained prior to scheduling the surgery/procedure.
- NIA's medical necessity review and determination is for the authorization of the surgeon's professional services and type of surgery being performed. NIA will provide Wellcare with the surgery type requested and authorization determination.
- Authorizations are valid for 90 days from the date of request for MSK.

### **Checking Authorizations**

You can check on the status of authorization requests quickly and easily by going to the NIA website, <https://www.RadMD.com>. After sign-in, select the **My Exam Requests** tab to view authorization requests and verify status.

### **Submitting Claims**

Claims continue to go directly to Wellcare. Please send your claims for MSK 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 Numbers:  
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 MSK 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.

#### 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 provider 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. Providers 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.
- Preauthorization and claims payment complaints/appeals: Follow the instructions on your non-authorization letter or Explanation of Benefit (EOB)/Explanation of Payment (EOP) notification.

#### How do referring/ordering physicians know who NIA is?

Wellcare and NIA share training and education materials with physicians and surgeons prior to the implementation. Wellcare and NIA also coordinate outreach and orientation for providers.

#### What will the member ID card look like? Will it have both NIA and Wellcare information on the card? Or will there be two cards?

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