



Cardiac Imaging Frequently Asked Questions

Cardiac Studies for Meridian Health Plan of Illinois Medicare-Medicaid Plan

Why do some cardiac-related studies require prior authorization?

Prior authorization is required to minimize radiation exposure and promote the most appropriate test for the continuum of care.

When did Evolent (formerly National Imaging Associates, Inc.) begin managing the cardiac program for Meridian Health Plan of Illinois Medicare-Medicaid?

- Evolent began managing the cardiac program for Meridian Health Plan of Illinois Medicare-Medicaid Plan on January 1, 2021.
- **Effective January 1, 2026: DSNP (FIDE)**

How does the program work?

The cardiac imaging management program assesses imaging technologies used to diagnose and monitor patients with cardiac-related conditions in non-emergent cases. The program takes a comprehensive approach to determine if a recommended test is the proper next step in diagnosing cardiac-related conditions or if another test is more appropriate.

What cardiac-related imaging procedures are included in the Meridian Health Plan of Illinois Medicare-Medicaid Plan program? Effective, January 1, 2021, the below outpatient, non-emergent procedures required prior authorization:

- CCTA
- Myocardial Perfusion Imaging (MPI)
- MUGA Scan
- Stress Echocardiography
- Echocardiography

What additional services are provided?

- Evidence-based algorithms to support the best diagnostic options for each patient
- Consultations with cardiologists related to elective cardiac diagnostic imaging when peer-to-peer review is required

What do ordering providers need to do?

Ordering providers need to get prior authorization for non-emergent, outpatient:

- Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)/Magnetic Resonance Angiography (MRA)
- Computed Tomography (CT)/Computed Tomography Angiography (CTA)
- Positron Emission Tomography (PET)
- CCTA
- Nuclear Cardiology/Nuclear Stress/MPI
- MUGA Scan
- Stress Echocardiography
- Echocardiography

Who will administer clinical oversight of the cardiac program?

Board-certified cardiologists worked with community-based physicians to develop evidence-based clinical guidelines and algorithms that determine the best available diagnostic pathway.

These board-certified cardiologists also consult with referring physicians to apply these guidelines and 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.

What happens if I need to have an inpatient or emergent cardiac procedure performed? Meridian Health Plan of Illinois Medicare-Medicaid Plan will continue to manage inpatient and emergency cardiac procedures as is done today.

KEY PROVISIONS

- Emergency room and inpatient imaging procedures do not require prior authorization.