

MEDICARE IMAGING DEMONSTRATION

Fact Sheet

July 2010

Background

The goal of the demonstration is to collect data regarding physician use of advanced diagnostic imaging services to determine the appropriateness of services in relation to medical specialty guidelines. The demonstration will examine appropriateness of services across a range of geographic areas, physician specialties, and practice settings in the Medicare fee-for-service (FFS) program; (but it will not include the Medicare Advantage program). The demonstration will test whether the use of decision support systems (DSS) can improve quality of care and reduce unnecessary radiation exposure by promoting appropriate ordering of advanced imaging services. The law specifically excludes any approaches that would require prior authorization.

Imaging Services

The demonstration focuses on the use of advanced diagnostic imaging services which are defined as diagnostic magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT), and nuclear medicine and other diagnostic imaging services as defined by the Secretary in consultation with specialty organizations and other stakeholders. X-ray, ultrasound and fluoroscopy are excluded from the demonstration.

The demonstration focuses on 11-targeted advanced imaging procedures within the three designated modalities (MRI, CT, nuclear medicine) which were selected based on high expenditures and utilization in the Medicare FFS population and the availability of relevant medical specialty appropriateness guidelines. Spect MPI, MRI lumbar spine, CT lumbar spine, MRI brain, CT brain, CT sinus, CT thorax, CT abdomen, CT pelvis, MRI Knee, and MRI shoulder will be included in the demonstration.

Participating Physicians

CMS is seeking participation by 2,500 to 3,500 physicians from 500 to 650 physician practices that vary in size, specialty mix, type (academic and private practice), and location. Physicians must also be able to submit data electronically.

Demonstration Design

Physician practices will receive feedback on the degree of appropriateness relative to the medical specialty guidelines provided by the DSS. Participating physicians also will be provided with periodic feedback reports that compare their ordering patterns against their peers. The demonstration will also assess the effect of feedback reports on physicians' ordering behavior.

A pre-post design will be used to assess the impact of DSSs on the ordering of advanced imaging test. During the 6 month pre-intervention phase, practices will use the DSS but the DSS will not

provide feedback regarding appropriateness or access to guidelines. During the 18 month post-intervention phase, practices will use the DSS for real time feedback regarding appropriateness and access to guidelines.

“Conveners” will provide a panel of participating physician practices that agree to use an advanced diagnostic imaging DSS for purposes of this demonstration. Through the DSS, a convener will collect data on physician ordering of the specified services and test results. The convener will distribute payments to the participating practices for reporting data, and other responsibilities. A competitive process will be used to select conveners.

Timeline

The demonstration is scheduled to start January 1, 2011 and operates for 2 years.

Funding

The statute provides \$10 million for the demonstration. Funding may be used for administering and evaluating the demonstration, payment to participating physicians and conveners for reasonable administrative costs, and incentives to encourage participation and appropriateness.

Waivers

The Secretary may waive provisions of Title XI and XVIII of the Social Security Act as may be necessary to implement the demonstration.

For further information:

Visit the CMS project website at:

http://www.cms.hhs.gov/DemoProjectsEvalRpts/downloads/Medicare_Imaging_Demonstration.pdf or email: ImagingDemo135b@cms.hhs.gov.