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Adult & Pediatric Medicine

PRE-OP CONSULTATIONS

Recently, as you are well aware, Medicare stopped allowing the billing of consultations across the board. Unfortunately, other insurances have now followed suit. We at Orchard Medical Associates have been concerned about the impact this change may have on our ability to accurately and effectively provide important consult information. Specifically, Medicare will not pay for any laboratory or other testing (e.g. EKG, Xray, etc) unless there is a specific diagnosis recognized by Medicare in the NCD Reference Guide for the test ordered. Before the change, internists could use a V-code for pre-operative assessment to allow for appropriate laboratory testing. With the new system, that is no longer permissible. As a result, certain patients are at risk of either not receiving appropriate lab testing or having to pay out-of-pocket for the testing.

We have felt that it is not fair for the patient to have to pay for pre-operative testing out of pocket. We also stand by our concern that an inability to appropriately test patients prevents us from being able to offer an accurate pre-operative assessment of their surgical risk. As such, we have modified our policy in an attempt to meet everyone's needs. We have received and heard the concerns voiced by the specialties that rely on us for pre-operative assessments and have revisited our policy.

To better serve our patients and consultants, while at the same time maintaining our initial stance that we cannot perform complete assessments without the proper testing, we have amended our policy. Going forward, we are able to perform pre-operative assessments for all patients provided that the specific pre-operative testing (e.g. CBC, lytes/bun/creat, PT/INR, EKG) is ordered by the operating physician with results forwarded to our office BEFORE THEIR SCHEDULED PRE-OP APPOINTMENT. With this information at hand, combined with our own examination of the patient, we can provide accurate information to the patient and surgeon. For those patients who have not had testing performed before their appointment, we will NOT be able to offer pre-operative assessment.

Our goal is to provide quality care and accurate information about our patients to the appropriate consultants before procedures are performed. We seek to do this in complete accordance with Medicare guidelines, and at minimal cost to the patient. Having pre-operative testing ordered by the operating surgeon and forwarded to our office before their appointment increases the chances that the patient will not sustain unwanted expense and will allow us to provide an accurate pre-operative assessment.

If there are any concerns or questions regarding how this revised policy may affect our mutual patients, please contact our Practice Manager, Maria Luiza St. Marie, at 413-439-0609 for clarification.

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