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MEDICARE REIMBURSEMENT FOR CORNEAL TOPOGRAPHY

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1 ***QUESTION:*** What is corneal topography performed with Heidelberg Engineering's ANTERION®?

ANSWER: Corneal topography is a non-invasive imaging technique for mapping the surface curvature of the cornea.

2 ***QUESTION:*** What diagnoses are typically covered and support a claim?

ANSWER: Corneal topography is most frequently used for the diagnosis and management of corneal diseases, disorders, abnormalities, injuries, or related to transplants. Check your local coverage determination policies for additional indications.

Medicare covers diagnostic tests that are medically necessary according to their guidelines. Medicare does not cover routine eye exams or tests, such as those for refractive error, including regular astigmatism.

3 ***QUESTION:*** What documentation is required in the medical record to support claims for corneal topography?

ANSWER: A physician's interpretation and report are required. A brief notation such as "abnormal" does not suffice. In addition to the images, the medical record should include:

- order for the test with medical rationale
- date of the test
- the reliability of the test (if compromised)
- test findings (*e.g.*, map and images of cornea)
- comparison with prior tests (if applicable)
- a diagnosis (if possible)
- the impact on treatment and prognosis
- physician's signature

4 ***QUESTION:*** What CPT code is used to describe this test?

ANSWER: Use CPT code 92025 (*Computerized corneal topography, unilateral or bilateral, with interpretation and report*) to report this service.

5 ***QUESTION:*** What is the reimbursement for 92025?

ANSWER: CPT 92025 is defined as "unilateral or bilateral" so reimbursement is usually for both eyes. The 2024 national Medicare Physician Fee Schedule allowable is $36. Of this amount, $17 is assigned to the technical component and $19 is the value of the professional component (*i.e.,* interpretation). These amounts are adjusted in each area by local wage indices. Other payers set their own rates, which may differ significantly from the Medicare published fee schedule.

Corneal topography is subject to Medicare's Multiple Procedure Payment Reduction (MPPR). This reduces the allowable for the technical component of the lesser-valued test when more than one test is performed on the same day.

6 ***QUESTION:*** Will Medicare cover corneal topography prior to cataract surgery?

ANSWER: Claims are reimbursed by Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs) if there is a covered diagnosis, in addition to cataract, supporting medical necessity. More often, testing with corneal topography prior to cataract surgery is associated with planning for concurrent corneal relaxing incisions or implantation of a toric IOL, and is not covered.

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7 ***QUESTION:*** Must the physician be in the office while corneal topography is being performed?

ANSWER: Medicare has no supervision policy published for this diagnostic test. In our opinion, it seems reasonable to use general supervision since most non-invasive ophthalmic tests come under that requirement. *General supervision* means the procedure is furnished under the physician's overall direction and control, but the physician's presence is not required during the performance of the procedure.

8 ***QUESTION:*** How often may this test be repeated?

ANSWER: In general, diagnostic tests are reimbursed when medically indicated. Clear documentation of the reason for testing is always required. Most often, the justification is an indication of progression of a chronic disease.

In 2021, CMS utilization of CPT 92025 was 1.2%. That is, for every 100 exams on Medicare patients, 92025 was paid about 1 time. Utilization for optometrists is about 0.3%. There is no utilization data on noncovered tests associated with refractive procedures or for non-Medicare payers.

9 ***QUESTION:*** Is corneal topography bundled with other services?

ANSWER: Along with the description of 92025, CPT instructs, *"Do not report 92025 in conjunction with 65710-65771"*. Medicare bundles 92025 with 65760, 65765 and 65767. Medicare also bundles a technician exam, 99211, with the test.

10 ***QUESTION:*** What is Medicare's position on corneal topography and refractive surgery?

ANSWER: Refractive surgery for the purpose of reducing dependence on eyeglasses or contact lenses is not covered by Medicare, nor are the associated diagnostic tests, including corneal topography. The patient is financially responsible for the service, either as a discrete charge or as part of the refractive surgery package. Inform the patient of their financial responsibility. If the Medicare beneficiary requests that a claim be filed, append modifier GY to the CPT code to indicate an excluded service; be sure to link the charge to the refractive diagnosis (*i.e.,* ICD-10 H52.22-).

11 ***QUESTION:*** If coverage is unlikely or uncertain, how should we proceed?

ANSWER: Explain to the patient why you feel the test is necessary, and that Medicare or other third-party payer will likely deny the claim. Ask the patient to assume financial responsibility for the charge. A financial waiver can take several forms, depending on insurance.

- An Advance Beneficiary Notice of Noncoverage (ABN) is required for services where Part B Medicare coverage is ambiguous or doubtful, and may be useful where a service is never covered. You may collect your fee from the patient at the time of service or wait for a Medicare denial. If both the patient and Medicare pay, promptly refund the patient or show why Medicare paid in error.
- For commercial insurance beneficiaries, a Notice of Exclusion from Health Plan Benefits (NEHB) is an alternative to an ABN.
- For Part C Medicare (Medicare Advantage), determination of benefits is required to identify beneficiary financial responsibility prior to performing noncovered services; MA Plans have their own waiver forms and processes.

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