

May 8, 2006

Medicare To Provide Broad Coverage of PET/CT for Oncology

Dear Colleagues:

Effective Monday, May 8, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid services now offers broad coverage of nearly all oncologic PET/CT applications for Medicare beneficiaries. Coverage includes scanning for diagnosis, staging, restaging and treatment monitoring; and includes coverage for unknown primaries and paraneoplastic syndromes. This new coverage is in addition to the already proven indications.

CMS had previously only covered PET/CT scans for oncologic imaging after analysis of efficacy on an indication by indication basis. This tedious process led to approval for certain indications for certain cancers (lung, lymphoma, breast, colon, melanoma, some thyroid, esophagus, head and neck, cervical). However, this process would be impractical to continue for every possible oncologic application. CMS is providing "Coverage with Evidence Development" for all previously uncovered indications and malignancy types. "Coverage with Evidence Determination" means that the new indications are covered, but efficacy data must be entered into the National Oncologic Pet Registry (NOPR).

This is an opportunity to try PET/CT for your patients when you think it might be beneficial to them, knowing that a national study that will determine the efficacy of this technology.

Nearly all malignancies are now covered by CMS for diagnosis, staging, restaging and therapy monitoring. (The exceptions are determination of regional nodal staging for melanoma and initial axillary lymph node staging for breast carcinoma- they are not covered by CMS). Previously covered oncologic indications (lung, colon, some breast, melanoma, lymphoma, head and neck, some thyroid, some cervical, esophageal) remain covered directly and are not to be enrolled in NOPR.

At the outset, I suggest you do not be too concerned with whether a particular application is covered through NOPR or covered directly. We at UISP will sort out whether the patient needs to be enrolled in NOPR.

Enrolling a patient who is covered through the NOPR should be easier than the process you may have had to do with some private insurance. The referring physician must complete a short ~5 question pre study questionnaire prior to the PET/CT examination and submit it to us at University Imaging at Science Park (UISP). We will register your patient in the NOPR database, schedule and perform the scan. You then must also complete a similar short questionnaire post PET/CT, and again we (UISP) submit that post-questionnaire to the NOPR. There are no right or wrong answers in the questionnaire – coverage is not determined by the answers.

Some key take home points about the National Oncologic PET Registry (NOPR) and University Imaging at Science Park (UISP):

- Broad coverage through NOPR only applies to Medicare patients. Coverage for patients with private insurance is unchanged.
- Only the expanded indications are part of NOPR. The previously covered indications remain covered directly and are not enrolled in NOPR
- Referring physicians do not need to determine whether or not an indication is in NOPR or is covered directly – we at UISP will sort out whether the patient needs to be enrolled through NOPR or not.
- The patients will be scanned and reports sent to you routinely.
- Registration in NOPR will be performed by University Imaging at Science Park
- Referring physicians must complete the short (~5 question) pre and post study questionnaire to determine the effect of the PET/CT on planned management. The questionnaire is returned to UISP
- UISP will input the questionnaire to NOPR and we must do this before the scan is performed.
- The patients will be informed about NOPR and asked to participate, but does not need written consent.
- PET/CT can be ordered by primary care or specialty physicians
- University Imaging at Science Park is the free standing outpatient PET/CT center of the Department of Imaging Sciences, University of Rochester.

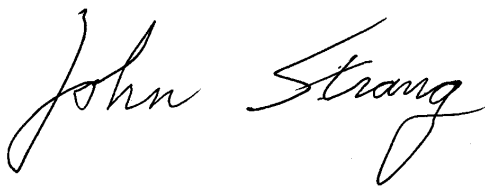
For more information, see:

www.cancerpetregistry.org - the NOPR homepage and particularly

<http://www.cancerpetregistry.org/clinicians.htm> - which covers the NOPR, the questionnaires, and the clinical indications in more detail.

We will assist you in every way through this new process. For routine patient scheduling as well as NOPR assistance – please call us at 585-785-5000 or visit us at www.urmc.rochester.edu/PETCT. Downloadable requisitions are on our web site.

We at University Imaging Science Park and The University of Rochester Department of Imaging Sciences look forward to participating in this important study. We are excited to be able to offer PET/CT to patients who were previously excluded, and pleased to contribute to medical knowledge and appropriate imaging through participation in the NOPR.



John Strang, M.D.

Director, University Imaging at Science Park

Associate Professor, Department of Diagnostic Imaging

University of Rochester

University Imaging at Science Park
Outpatient CT and PET/CT

110 Science Parkway, Suite 100 • Rochester, New York 14620-4251

585-785-5000 • FAX: 585-756-2474

website: <http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/PETCT>