Subject: Colon Cancer Screening*

Updated: October 24, 2006

Department(s): Utilization Management

Policy: Tests that screen asymptomatic patients for colon cancer are reimbursable under Plans administered by QualCare, Inc., subject to the criteria and conditions enumerated below.

Objective: To assure proper and consistent reimbursement and to assure that reimbursable screening tests are limited to those for which scientific evidence demonstrates beneficial effects on health outcomes.

Procedure:

- Screening tests for colon cancer are performed on patients who do not have symptoms suggestive of colon cancer and are subject to provisions of a specific Plan’s wellness benefit.

- Screening tests for colon cancer that are reimbursable under Plans administered by QualCare, Inc., are:
  - Stool testing for occult blood, either by a peroxidase method (CPT 82270) or an immunochemical method (CPT 82274)
  - Flexible colonoscopy (CPT 45378, 45380, 45383, 45384, 45385)

- The following screening tests for colon cancer are not reimbursable under Plans administered by QualCare, Inc., because available evidence does not support their efficacy and/or beneficial effects on health outcomes:
• Barium enema (CPT 74270)

• Stool screening using molecular markers (PreGen-Plus and others)

➢ Computerized tomographic colonography for colon cancer screening (CT or "virtual colonoscopy, CPT 74280) is reimbursable ONLY:

• in evaluating individuals on whom optical colonoscopy is not feasible because of obstructive or stenosing lesions

OR

• When an underlying medical condition including but not limited to heart or lung disease precludes the sedation needed for optical colonoscopy

References


Mandel JS. Screening of patients at average risk for colon cancer. Med Clin N Amer 2005;89(1):43-59 (Jan)

Rabeneck L. Is computed tomographic colonography effective for colorectal cancer screening? CMAJ 2004;179(9):1392 (Apr 27)


*Consistent with Summary Plan Description (SPD). When there is discordance between this policy and the SPD, the provisions of the SPD prevail.*