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January 2015

Dear Medical Director:

It is the position of the American Urological Association (AUA) that urologists are appropriately trained in the performance of sonographic procedures. In spite of this, it has come to our attention that many insurance carriers are implementing policies, which dictate that only radiologists may perform these procedures. Such policies are simply inappropriate.

Urological training programs in the United States place heavy emphasis on the use of ultrasound and sonography during training. It should also be noted that the American Board of Urology tests extensively on these subjects during its certification and recertification exams, with special emphasis given to transrectal sonographic studies and transrectal sonographically guided biopsies of the prostate, as well as bladder and kidney sonography.

Transrectal sonography is most often done to conduct a biopsy and urologists are best qualified to determine the indications for and manage the complications of prostate biopsy. In fact, it is the urologist and not the radiologist who is uniquely qualified to conduct these studies given their levels of interest, common knowledge and training in these areas. It is unfair to develop this type of policy given urology's specific training requirements in sonography, and the detailed examinations conducted by our Board.

I have also attached the American Urological Association's Policy on Ultrasound Utilization and Training and Policy on Urologists' Use of Imaging Services. As indicated, urologists are highly qualified to perform these services.

In the case of an appeal, all other correspondence should be directed to the medical office requesting the review of the denied claim.

If you would like to discuss this issue on ultrasounds further, please contact Stephanie N. Stinchcomb, Director of Reimbursement & Regulation at 866-746-4282, extension 3786.

Sincerely,

David Penson, MD, MPH
Chair, Health Policy Council

Pat Fulgham, MD
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