

Updates to Carelon Medical Benefits Management, Inc. Clinical Appropriateness Guidelines

Effective for dates of service on and after **April 4, 2026**, the following updates will apply to the Carelon Medical Benefits Management, Inc. Clinical Appropriateness Guidelines. As part of the Carelon guideline annual review process, these updates are focused on advancing efforts to drive clinically appropriate, safe, and affordable health care services.

Advanced Imaging

Imaging of the Abdomen and Pelvis

- Gastrointestinal Indications
 - Removed requirement for radiographs in pediatric SBO to align with most recent ACR criteria
- Hepatobiliary Indications
 - Simplification of hepatic fibrosis assessment
- Osseous Indications
 - Simplification/alignment with Spine Imaging guideline for Axial spondyloarthropathy
- Renal, Adrenal, and Urinary Tract Indications
 - Operational clarification/simplification for adrenal mass
 - removed redundancy for indeterminate mass > 2 cm,
 - alignments with existing ACR reference
 - Hematuria -clarification of intent for asymptomatic presentations of hematuria and risk aligned with AUA
 - Urinary tract calculi -Simplification for nondiagnostic KUB/US and pre-/post-procedure imaging for urinary tract calculi
- Miscellaneous Conditions
 - Hernia- addition of groin hernia following nondiagnostic US,
 - specification of MRI in adults only when CT cannot be performed
 - Sports Hernia-indication removed due to lack of evidence and low utility; chronic groin pain addressed under Abdominal/Pelvic Pain indication
- Perioperative Evaluation, not otherwise specified
 - New allowance for bariatric procedure-related imaging post-procedure complications not addressed elsewhere (ACR AUC).
- Nonspecific Signs and Symptoms
 - Simplification/removal of chronicity for abdominal or pelvic pain.
 - US requirement for testicular pain (ACR alignment).

Imaging of the Chest

- Infectious and Inflammatory Conditions
 - Alignment with ACR AUC for CT follow up of pneumonia
 - Follow-up interval for pneumonia at 6—12 weeks
- Tumor or Neoplasm
 - Simplification of content and allowance for adenopathy suggested on other imaging
- Abnormal Test Findings
 - Clarification for nodules/findings detected by radiography

Imaging of the Head and Neck

- Infectious and Inflammatory Conditions
 - Simplifications to screening, complication consideration, initial evaluation/repeat imaging for Sinusitis/rhinosinusitis.
- Tumor/Soft Tissue Mass
 - Simplification/allowance for clinically suspected malignant adenopathy
 - Specification for follow up imaging after ultrasound or laryngoscopy
- Signs and Symptoms
 - Specification of objective findings of dizziness or vertigo aligned with ACR AUC; including current Hearing loss/Tinnitus allowances (aligned with Brain Imaging guidelines).

Oncologic Imaging

- Cancer screening
 - Breast cancer screening: ACR alignment for atypia (intermed risk) + increased density, ACR/NCCN alignment for extreme density in absence of other risk (NCCN Cat 1 ≥ age 50)
 - Lung cancer screening: Operational clarifications (annual evaluation, removal of signs/symptoms)
 - Pancreatic cancer screening: NCCN alignment – added ATM or BRCA 2 mutations
- Anal cancer
 - NCCN alignment (Surveillance)
- Breast cancer
 - NCCN alignment (Diagnostic workup CT)
- Colorectal cancer
 - Simplification of PET management scenarios (preserved thresholds for negative/nondiagnostic imaging)
- Esophageal and Gastroesophageal Junction Cancers
 - NCCN alignment
- Gastric Cancer
 - NCCN alignment
- Head and Neck Cancer
 - NCCN alignment (principles of imaging not subtype specific)
- Kidney Cancer
 - Clarification (content gap, stage III/IV addressed under restaging or treatment response)
- Lymphoma – Hodgkin
 - NCCN alignment/clarification – follow up changed to completion of all therapy
- Lymphoma – Non-Hodgkin and Leukemia
 - NCCN alignment for ALL, AML; Condensed NHL section for operational simplification, NCCN alignment by subtype
- Ovarian Cancer – All Variants
 - Added allowance for rising tumor markers/negative imaging (NCCN aligned)
- Prostate Cancer
 - PSMA PET update for lutetium Lu 177 imaging/alignment with Carelon RadOnc guideline
- Sarcomas of Bone/Soft Tissue
 - NCCN alignment

- Thyroid Cancer
 - NCCN alignment/simplification across subtypes – standard imaging nondiagnostic

For questions related to guidelines, please contact Carelon via email at MedicalBenefitsManagement.guidelines@Carelton.com. Additionally, you may access and download a copy of the current and upcoming guidelines [here](#).