



Provider Update

This update contains pertinent information about changes that will impact the Johns Hopkins HealthCare provider network.

Update to USFHP Low Back Pain Imaging Policy

Effective Date: May 1, 2021

Line(s) of Business Affected: Johns Hopkins US Family Health Plan (USFHP)

Type of Change: Policy

Explanation of Change(s):

To comply with a recent [TRICARE policy update](#), Johns Hopkins USFHP will exclude (not cover) all imaging, including X-ray, ultrasound, CT scan and MRI, for acute low back pain (ICD-10 M54.5) within six weeks of the onset of symptoms and in the absence of clinical warning signs (“red flags”), indicating an underlying cause from patient history and/or physical examinations.

This policy applies to dates of service on or after May 1, 2021.

Clinical Warning Signs/Red Flags:

- Possible fracture, such as from a major trauma, or a more minor trauma in older or potentially osteoporotic patients; history of osteoporosis; chronic steroid use.
- Possible tumor, cancer, or infection, as evidenced by: a history of cancer; a history of intravenous drug use; fevers, chills, or unexplained weight loss; or immune suppression.
- Possible cauda equina syndrome, as evidenced by: bowel or bladder dysfunction or saddle anesthesia (loss of sensation in the buttocks, perineum, and inner surfaces of the thighs).
- Major motor weakness.
- Progressive neurological symptoms.

To ensure accurate claim adjudication, claims should include all relevant and accurate diagnosis codes, including “history of” diagnosis codes (if applicable), and the completion of Block 14 of the CMS 1500 claim form, “Date of Current Illness, Injury or Pregnancy.”

Please contact the JHHC Provider Relations department at 888-895-4998 with any questions or concerns.