

Provider Update

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

USFHP Low Back Pain Imaging Policy-Post Service Claim Review

Effective Date: Nov. 1, 2021

Health Plans: Johns Hopkins US Family Health Plan (USFHP)

Type of Change: Policy and Process

Explanation of Change:

As notified in the Provider Update “PRUP141-Low Back Pain,” communicated in March 2021, and in compliance with a recent TRICARE policy update, Johns Hopkins USFHP will exclude (not cover) all imaging for low back pain (ICD-10 M54.50, M54.51, and M54.59), including x-ray, ultrasound, CT scan, and MRI, 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 exam. The applicable TRICARE policy can be found [here](#).

Clinical Warning Signs/Red Flags Are as Follows:

- 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 processing, radiology claims should include all relevant and accurate diagnosis codes, including “history of” diagnosis codes (if applicable), the completion of Block 14 of the CMS 1500 claim form, “Date of Current Illness, Injury or Pregnancy”, and the inclusion of applicable occurrence codes (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 11) and date of occurrence on the UB04 claim form.

Claims submitted without date of onset information as specified above will be pended and denied with directions to resubmit the claim with the required information within 90 days of the denial.

A post payment review will be conducted on all low back pain imaging claims to ensure compliance with this policy and payments will be retracted for non-compliant claims that do not meet the requirements outlined above.

This post service claim review process will apply to radiology claims billed with dates of service on or after Nov. 1, 2021.

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