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Glaucoma Severity Affects Frequency of Procedures

Most doctors are not aware of changes by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and how these affect the frequency of performing Scanning Laser procedures for a Glaucoma patient. Scanning Laser includes; OCT, GDx and HRT

Most payers previously allowed up to four Scanning laser procedures per year for patients with Advanced Glaucoma.

However, almost all regions in the country have now eliminated any Scanning laser procedures for patients with Advanced Glaucoma Damage. Instead, they will allow up to four Visual Fields procedures per year.

The new frequency for Scanning laser is:

- **Suspect or Mild Glaucoma** – 1 time per year
- **Moderate Glaucoma** – 2 times per year
- **Advanced Glaucoma** – NO scanning laser. Up to 4 Visual Fields per year

Medicare's guidelines are:

“Scanning computerized ophthalmic diagnostic imaging (SCODI) is not considered medically reasonable and necessary for patients with “advanced” glaucomatous damage. Instead, visual field testing should be performed.”

Most regions have already adopted this restriction. The few remaining regions will be changing soon.

Check in EyeCOR if this limitation is in effect for your region.

EyeCOR shows this information and more in our Medical Coding and Reimbursement as well as detailing CMS's Glaucoma Severity Definitions.

GLAUCOMA SEVERITY DEFINITIONS - CMS has adopted the following definitions:

Mild Glaucoma Damage:

- Intraocular pressure >22 mmHg as measured by applanation.
- Symmetric or vertically elongated cup enlargement, neural rim intact, cup/disc ratio >0.4.
- Focal optic disc notch.
- Optic disc hemorrhage or history of optic disc hemorrhage.
- Nasal step or small paracentral or arcuate scotoma.
- Mild constriction of visual field isopters.

Mild Glaucoma Damage:

- Enlarged optic cup with neural rim remaining but sloped or pale, cup to disc ratio >0.5 but <0.9
- Definite focal notch with thinning of the neural rim.
- Definite glaucomatous visual field defect, e.g., arcuate or paracentral scotoma, nasal step, pencil wedge, or constriction of isopters.

Advanced Glaucoma Damage:

- Severe generalized constriction of isopters (i.e., Goldmann I4e <10 degrees of fixation).
- Absolute visual field defects within 10 degrees of fixation.
- Severe generalized reduction of retinal sensitivity.
- Loss of central visual acuity, with temporal island remaining.
- Diffuse enlargement of optic nerve cup, with cup to disc ratio >0.8.
- Wipeout of all or a portion of the neural retinal rim.