MEDICAL ASSISTANCE BULLETIN
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA * DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

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SUBJECT: Telephone Prior Approval of Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Scans

BY:

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Deputy Secretary for Medical Assistance Programs

PURPOSE:

The purposes of this bulletin are to notify providers enrolled in the Medical Assistance (MA) Program that prior approval for Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Scans may be obtained via telephone and to set forth the procedures for obtaining such approval.

SCOPE:

This bulletin applies to all providers enrolled in the MA Program who perform PET Scans in the Fee-for-Service (FFS) delivery system.

BACKGROUND:

When PET Scans originally became available to the medical community, the Office of Medical Assistance Programs (OMAP) processed requests for this service through the 1150 Administrative Waiver process, also known as the Program Exception (PE) process. Effective January 1, 2002, OMAP added a number of procedure codes for PET Scans to the MA Program Fee Schedule subject to Prior Authorization (PA). Requests for PET Scans must currently be submitted on an MA 97 form, either for PA of codes identified on the MA Fee Schedule or for a PE of codes currently not on the Fee Schedule. Requests are reviewed for medical necessity on an individual basis, and written notification of the determination is issued within 18 days of receipt of the MA 97 form. Providers have expressed concern that submission and review of hard copy documentation of the medical necessity for this service may prevent timely delivery of the service.

DISCUSSION:

In order to expedite approval of medically necessary treatment, OMAP is changing the process by which providers may request prior approval of PET Scans, for both PA and PE requests, from a paper process to a telephone process through the Department's Outpatient Prior Authorization toll-free hotline. The Outpatient Prior Authorization toll-free number is 1-800-558-4777.

PROCEDURE:

When calling the Outpatient Prior Authorization toll-free line to request prior approval to perform PET Scans, providers must have the

following information available:

- Recipient MA identification number.
- Prescribing physician MA provider identification number or, if the provider is not enrolled in the MA Program, the Pennsylvania license number.
- Facility 13-digit provider identification number where the PET Scan will be performed.
- ICD-9 diagnosis code.
- Procedure code for the PET Scan.
- Documentation of medical necessity, such as results of previous diagnostic studies, including biopsies, CAT scans and ultrasounds.

A certification number will be issued at the time of the telephone request. The caller will be notified of the final determination, or informed of the additional information needed to make a determination, at the time of the call. A return call will be made to the requestor if physician review is needed to make a decision. If additional information is needed, the request will be pended until the additional information is received. The caller will be notified of the final determination during the telephone call in which the Department receives the additional information. If the requested additional information is not received within 18 days, the request will be denied. If the PET Scan continues to be needed, the provider must submit a new request.

In all cases, written notice will be issued within 1 day after the decision is made, but no later than 18 days after receipt of the initial request.

Requests for PET Scans may continue to be submitted on an MA 97 form. Such requests will continue to be processed within 18 days of receipt of the request.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

The appropriate toll-free number for your provider type.

Visit the Office of Medical Assistance Programs website at **www.dpw.state.pa.us/omap**.