



Claiming Medicare Benefits – Date of Service for Pathology Providers

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Date of Service for pathology providers

When submitting claims for Medicare benefits, the date of service is important for assessing patient eligibility for Medicare benefits, for example where a test has a restriction on the frequency in which a patient can receive a Medicare benefit for a pathology test.

For the purposes of submitting a Medicare claim for a pathology service, the date of service should be reported as the date of the specimen collection or, where multiple samples are taken for a single Medicare-billed test, the date of the first specimen collection. The reason for this is that some pathology tests are performed in multiple parts, and potentially performed on different days.

Exceptions

There are some exceptions for reporting the date of service for pathology, for example, where testing is performed on archival specimens that may be up to a few years old. In these cases, it is not possible to use the date of specimen collection as the date of service. In this situation, date of request should be reported as the date of service.

However, it should also be noted that a Medicare benefit is not payable, and should not be claimed, until all aspects of the service have been rendered and all aspects of the item descriptor have been fulfilled. For the purposes of a pathology test, this includes interpretation, analysis and reporting.