

Updates to Carelon Medical Benefits Management, Inc. Clinical Appropriateness Guidelines

Effective for dates of service on and after September 10, 2023, the updates listed below will apply to the Carelon* Clinical Appropriateness Guidelines (formerly AIM Specialty Health). As part of the Carelon guideline annual review process, these updates advance efforts to drive clinically appropriate, safe and affordable healthcare services.

Imaging of the Extremities:

- Shoulder arthroplasty – clarified that MRI should not be used for preoperative assessment of bone stock and bone version (CT only)

Imaging of the Spine:

- Spinal infection – added criterion for imaging in patients at risk for infection based on American College of Radiology (ACR) appropriateness criteria
- Radiculopathy – added indication for CT when being done as a myelogram, based on ACR appropriateness criteria and feedback from subject matter experts

Vascular Imaging:

- Vascular anatomic delineation prior to procedures – removed exclusions for coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) and open valve replacement/repair
- Vascular anatomic delineation prior to transcatheter aortic valve implantation (TAVI/TAVE) – allowed CT chest as an alternative to CTA
- Stenosis or occlusion of extracranial carotid arteries – limited screening for patients with incidentally detected carotid calcification to those undergoing preoperative evaluation for cardiac surgery; modified criteria for management of known stenosis to allow follow-up per American College of Cardiology guidelines
- Pulmonary hypertension – clarified that criteria are applicable to all causes, not just pulmonary arterial hypertension
- Unexplained hypotension – removed indication as it is more appropriate for inpatient management
- Peripheral arterial disease – removed cilostazol as prerequisite therapy; added baseline evaluation and surveillance indications following endovascular revascularization
- Popliteal artery aneurysm – added diagnosis and management indications; added surveillance for unrepaired aneurysms to align with Society for Vascular Surgery guidelines

For questions about these guidelines, email Carelon at medicalbenefitsmanagement.guidelines@carelon.com. Additionally, you may access and download a copy of the [current and upcoming guidelines](#).

*On March 1, 2023, AIM Specialty Health began operating as Carelon Medical Benefits Management, Inc.

Carelon Medical Benefits Management, an independent company, is contracted to provide precertification services for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama.