

Diagnostic Imaging: Assuring You Are Performing Best-Practice Care

Diagnostic imaging carries risk of harm.

- Unnecessary imaging studies produce no benefit to the patient and can result in additional invasive evaluation of false positive results increasing the risk of harm.
- One chest CT scan can expose a patient to radiation levels equivalent to 54 mammograms or 68 chest x-rays. (*J Radiol Prot*)
- Contrast media used in diagnostic imaging are associated with risk of severe reactions including renal failure, anaphylactic shock, and local damage to tissue. (*American Family Physician*)

There is significant misuse and overuse of diagnostic imaging.

- 13-14 percent of diagnostic scans ordered by Family Medicine and General Internal Medicine physicians do not meet American College of Radiology's recommended diagnostic imaging guidelines. (*National Imaging Associates*)
- Self-referring physicians order 2-8 times as many scans as other providers. (*Hillman, JAMA*)
- Worried well seek reassurance from imaging tests and an aging population expects a scan for every pain. (*Glabman, Managed Care*)

Diagnostic imaging is a major contributor to rising health care costs.

- CT, MR, and nuclear medicine utilization paid by Medicare rose 15 percent annually between 1999 and 2000.
- In 2005, MRI/CT scan utilization for HealthPartners increased 20 percent, more than twice the rate of other health care services.

Because of increasing costs, patients are paying more out-of pocket.

- Copays are 20 percent of the cost of an MRI or CT scan.

What you can do....

- Perform a careful assessment and evaluation prior to diagnostic imaging decisions.
- Refer to HealthPartners Designated MRI/CT providers located on HealthPartners.com to ensure quality services at the lowest overall out-of pocket cost for your patients.
- Follow Imaging Best Practice Guidelines available online at ICSI.org and expert panel recommendations from the American College of Radiology online at ACR.org.
- Consider taking advantage of decision support tools in your EMR.

What HealthPartners will do....

- Engage members in informed decision making including Best Choice Provider selection
- Develop programs to support best practices consistent with the delivery of safe, timely, efficient, effective, equitable, and patient centered care.