



UEI Coding Alert # 5 November 16, 2005

Laser Coherence Tomography (LCT) & Visual Fields

LCT (includes OCT, HRT, and GDX) has been well documented to aid in the early detection of glaucoma. In particular OCT is also a valuable tool for evaluation and treatment of patients with retinal disease, particularly certain macular abnormalities such as cysts, holes or pseudohole, and puckering.

Depending on visual fields to separate those patients with glaucoma from those without the disease would miss a large number of patients; As we all know, as many as 50 percent of the ganglion cells may be lost before there is a glaucomatous visual field defect created.

Utilization Guidelines

Documentation supporting the medical necessity of LCT or visual fields should be legible, maintained in the patient record, and must be available to Medicare upon request.

Medicare's National Coverage Determinations Manual is straight forward and indicates that Medicare would cover LCT (CPT 92135), as medically necessary, billed no more than four (4) times per year/per eye.

The National Correct Coding Initiative indicates that LCT (CPT 92135) and visual fields testing (CPT 92081 - 92083) can be billed together. Currently, most commercial carriers will pay for both tests, although, this is subject to change.

However.....

The guidelines for the use of LCT (update 10-13-05) as published by the Texas Local Medicare Contractor, Trailblazer Health, indicate the following:

- Once per year would be appropriate with LCT (CPT 92135) to follow pre-glaucoma patients, those with "**mild damage**" and those with stable, well controlled glaucoma.
- Patients with "**moderate damage**" may be followed with LCT (CPT 92135) OR visual Fields (CPT 92081 - 92083). One or two tests per year may be appropriate. **Both tests, OCT and Visual Fields, done together or separated by a short period of time, are not considered medically necessary.**
- In "**advanced damage**" visual field (CPT 92081 - 92083) testing would be preferred instead of LCT (CPT 92135). It would rarely be necessary to perform more than four (4) visual fields in a year in "advanced damage," and laser coherence tomography (LCT) would rarely be necessary or beneficial.