



Payment Policies

To date, the IAC is aware that the following insurers or companies have adopted echocardiography reimbursement directives. While the IAC attempts to stay abreast of reimbursement policies as a service to the echocardiography community, these policies are changed and updated regularly by the insurance carriers. Therefore, the IAC recommends that applicant facilities contact the insurance carriers in their area for the most accurate and current information to ensure compliance with reimbursement requirements at all times. If you are aware of additional payment policies, or have questions about the information posted, please e-mail reimbursement@intersocietal.org.

PLEASE NOTE: The policy details within this document detailing accreditation requirements are referenced directly from insurer websites and manuals and are only a portion of the full reimbursement directives, please search for the full policy using the links provided.

Aetna (National)

Referenced from the [Office Manual for Health Care Professionals – All Regions](#)

Radiology Accreditation

Aetna requires accreditation to be eligible for reimbursement for the technical component of advanced diagnostic imaging procedures. Accreditation can be from:

- American College of Radiology (ACR)
- **Intersocietal Accreditation Commission (IAC)**
- Joint Commission (TJC), and/or RadSite

The following types of providers require this accreditation:

- Independent diagnostic testing facilities
- Freestanding imaging centers
- Office-based imaging facilities
- Physicians
- Nonphysician practitioners
- Suppliers of advanced diagnostic imaging procedures

For these purposes, advanced diagnostic imaging procedures exclude X-ray, ultrasound, fluoroscopy and mammography. Included are:

- Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)
- Magnetic resonance angiography (MRA)
- Computed tomography (CT)
- **Echocardiograms**
- Nuclear medicine imaging, such as positron emission tomography (PET)
- Single photon emission computed tomography (SPECT)

Note: Providers not accredited by the ACR, IAC, TJC and/or RadSite will not be eligible for payment for advanced diagnostic imaging services.

Please note: The above requirements list only a portion of the full reimbursement directive as related to accreditation. For full requirements, please refer to the [Network Participation Criteria](#) or the [Office Manual for Health Care Professionals – All Regions \(Updated September 2022\)](#)»

Anthem BCBS (Virginia)

Referenced from the [Anthem Virginia Facility Provider Manual](#)

Diagnostic Imaging Accreditation:

Within 30 days of receipt of a written request, Facility provider shall provide to Anthem such information as may be requested concerning diagnostic imaging services, equipment, licensure and/or accreditation. Facility shall provide such information in the manner and format reasonably required by Anthem (including, without limitation, using a web-based tool). Additionally, after making its original submission of this information to Anthem, whenever any material change occurs with respect to Facility's diagnostic imaging services, equipment, licensure and/or accreditation, Facility shall update Anthem on such change within 30 days of the change (unless a shorter timeframe is required elsewhere in this Agreement).

Facilities that perform or conduct any Ultrasound, CT, CTA, MRI, MRA, MRS, PET, Cardiac Echocardiography and/or Nuclear/Nuclear Cardiology studies shall be accredited by the American College of Radiology (ACR), [Intersocietal Accreditation Commission \(IAC\)](#), American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine (AIUM) or the American Society of Breast Surgeons (ASBS) for each piece of equipment utilized in such studies. Facility has one year from the acquisition of the modality to obtain accreditation. Facility will make no charge and render no bill to any Plan, the Member, or the Member's guarantor for any of the studies listed above, and they shall have no obligation to make any payment to anyone, including Facility, for such studies, unless the studies are performed on accredited equipment as specified above

Please note: The above requirements list only a portion of the full reimbursement directive as related to accreditation. For full requirements, please refer to the [Anthem Virginia Facility Provider Manual](#) (Updated June 2022).

Emblem Health (New York)

Referenced from the Emblem Health Website

EmblemHealth reimburses cardiologists for approved echocardiography studies and nuclear studies, but only if they are performed at accredited locations. Pre-authorization rules apply where applicable.

Accreditation for **echocardiography** studies requires both:

1. Cardiology board certification of the physician by the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM), American Osteopathic Board of Internal Medicine (AOBIM), or National Board of Echocardiography (NBE) and
2. **Services rendered in laboratories accredited in transthoracic echocardiography by the Intersocietal Accreditation Commission (IAC Echocardiography).**

Accreditation for **nuclear studies** requires both:

1. Certification of the physician by the American Board of Radiology (ABR), American Board of Nuclear Medicine (ABNM) or Certification Board of Nuclear Cardiology (CBNC) and
2. **Services rendered in laboratories accredited for Nuclear/PET by the Intersocietal Accreditation Commission (IAC Nuclear/PET) or American College of Radiology (ACR-Nuclear Medicine).**

Accreditation for **PET studies** requires:

1. Certification of the physician by the American Board of Radiology (ABR) or American Board of Nuclear Medicine (ABNM) or American Board of Internal Medicine in cardiology, and
2. Certification of the physician by Certification Board of Nuclear Cardiology (CBNC), and
3. **Services rendered in laboratories accredited for PET by the Intersocietal Accreditation Commission (IAC Nuclear/PET w/cardiac imaging) or American College of Radiology (ACR in PET).**

Read more in the [Anthem Provider Manual >> Chapter 21: Outpatient Diagnostic Imaging Privileging](#).

Please note: The requirements listed above are only a portion of the complete reimbursement directive as related to echocardiography and nuclear/PET accreditation.

Highmark (DE, PA, WV)

Highmark, with the assistance of National Imaging Associates, Inc. (NIA), an affiliate of Magellan Health, Inc., has implemented a new imaging privileging process. On this page you will find Highmark's privileging requirements and online application instructions.

Privileging is only required for imaging provider sites that are physically located in the 29 counties of western Pennsylvania, the 21 counties of central Pennsylvania and the 13 counties in northeastern Pennsylvania. Highmark's indemnity members are excluded from this requirement.

- [Highmark Radiology Management Program Privileging Requirements](#) (Effective January 1, 2018)

Requirements Specific to Each Modality – Echocardiography

Echocardiography/Stress Echocardiography:

- Must be performed and interpreted by or under the personal supervision of a physician credentialed in radiology or cardiology.
**“Personal supervision” means that the professional provider must be present in the immediate vicinity or must be immediately available by electronic means (e.g. telephone, radio, and telecommunications) in the event his or her personal assistance is required for care of the patient. All supervision must be in accordance with the State licensure requirements of the performing licensed health care practitioner.*
- Echocardiography systems must have Color Flow Doppler capability.
- **Practices must achieve accreditation by the [Intersocietal Accreditation Commission \(IAC\) Echocardiography](#) within 6 months of provisional acceptance in the Privileging Program.**
- Stress Echocardiography must be performed under the direct supervision (physician must be present) of a credentialed physician who has a current Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) certification.

**Network pediatric cardiologists are not required to use a sonographer for pediatric echocardiography.*

Obstetrical/Gynecological Ultrasound (Fetal Echo):

- **Practices are eligible to be reimbursed for fetal echocardiography testing (procedure codes 76825, 76826, 76827, 76828 and 93325) as specified in the Obstetrics IV DIP level by achieving accreditation in Fetal Echocardiography from the [Intersocietal Accreditation Commission \(IAC\) Echocardiography](#) or from American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine (AIUM) within 6 months of Provisional acceptance in the Privileging Program.**
- Fetal Echocardiography must be interpreted by a credentialed radiologist, perinatologist (Maternal Fetal Medicine), or obstetrician.

Please note: This is only a portion of the Highmark Provider Privileging Requirements as related to the requirements for accreditation. For complete requirements, please review the Highmark Provider Privileging Requirements on the Highmark website at hbcbs.highmarkprc.com/Care-Management-Programs/Radiology-Management-ProgramPrivileging-Application-and-Requirements.

UnitedHealthcare (National)

Imaging Accreditation

UnitedHealthcare is committed to ensuring that all of our members have access to quality health care, including medical imaging services. We believe patients deserve assurance that equipment, technologists and physician practices are in compliance with professional society-developed performance standards for CT, MRI, PET, nuclear medicine/cardiology and echocardiography procedures (collectively referred to as "Advanced Imaging Studies").

If you perform Advanced Imaging Studies and bill on a Form CMS 1500, or the electronic equivalent, you must obtain accreditation from one of the accrediting agencies listed below.

- American College of Radiology (ACR)
- [Intersocietal Accreditation Commission \(IAC\)](#)
- RadSite
- The Joint Commission (TJC)

Accreditation is required for the following Advanced Imaging Studies:

- CT scan
- **Echocardiography**
- MRI
- Nuclear Medicine / Cardiology
- PET scan

What You Can Expect

- The Imaging Accreditation requirement applies to global and technical service claims.
- The accreditation process can take up to 9 months to complete.
- Accreditation requires submitting an application and fulfilling accreditation standards.

*Pursuant to UnitedHealthcare's Imaging Accreditation Program, we require accreditation for Advanced Imaging Studies. **At this time, however, UnitedHealthcare will not require accreditation as a condition of eligibility for reimbursement, and therefore will not administratively deny claims for Advanced Imaging Studies based on lack of accreditation.** When a decision is made to activate the claim denial component of the Imaging Accreditation Program, we will communicate the effective date to you. UnitedHealthcare remains committed to advancing the quality and safety of imaging services through the Imaging Accreditation Program and will keep you apprised of any changes to our program.*

Learn more at www.uhcprovider.com/en/resource-library/Join-Our-Network/Imaging-Accreditation.html.

UnitedHealthCare - Oxford Health Plans (CT, NJ, NY)

The outpatient imaging self-referral policy is designed to promote appropriate use of diagnostic imaging by primary care physicians and specialty physicians in office settings. High quality imaging service standards are promoted by requiring that providers limit their imaging to their specialty practice areas, and by meeting the standards of one of several national accreditation organizations, like the following:

- The American College of Radiology (ACR)
- The American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine (AIUM)
- The Intersocietal Accreditation Commission (IAC)
- RadSite
- The Joint Commission (TJC)

Cardiologists – Nuclear Medicine

Nuclear studies require: Laboratories accredited by Intersocietal Commission (IAC Nuclear/PET), the American College of Radiology (ACR), The Joint Commission (TJC), or Radsite in SPECT.

Cardiologists-Pediatric Only

Echocardiography studies require: Certification by the Intersocietal Accreditation Commission for Echocardiography (IAC)

Refer to the Clinical Policy titled [Obstetrical Ultrasonography](#) for additional information.

Please Note: The details above list only a small portion of UnitedHealthCare's requirements as related to accreditation only. For complete NA requirements, visit the [UHC website](#).

Wellmark BCBS (Iowa, South Dakota)

Referenced from the Wellmark Provider Guide

Facility/Entity Accreditation/CMS Requirements

All facilities/entities must have at least one of the following licenses/certifications/accreditations to meet credentialing requirements:

Radiology/Imaging Center (including, but not limited to, the following types of centers):

- General Radiology
- CT, CTA
- **Echocardiography**
- Mammography
- MRI, MRA
- Nuclear Cardiology
- PET Scan
- Radiation Oncology
- Ultrasound
- Portable X-Ray

Centers offering any of the services listed immediately below must be accredited by ACR or one of the accrediting agencies of the [Intersocietal Accreditation Commission](#) (IAC Vascular Testing, IAC Echocardiography, IAC Nuclear/PET, IAC MRI or IAC CT):

- CT
- CTA
- Nuclear Cardiology
- **Echocardiography**
- PET
- PET/CT
- MRI
- MRA

If the center does not offer any of the services above, it must be accredited by AAAHC, The Joint Commission, ACR, or one of the accreditation agencies of the Intersocietal Accreditation Commission (IAC Vascular Testing, IAC Echocardiography, IAC Nuclear/PET, IAC MRI or IAC CT).

Please note: The above requirements list only a portion of the full reimbursement directive. Please refer to the [Wellmark Provider Guide](#) (updated Jan 2023) for additional information on the complete requirements and for specific requirements for other modalities.