OVERVIEW
Patients who are prescribed chronic warfarin anticoagulation need ongoing monitoring that has generally
taken place in a physician’s office or anticoagulation clinic. Home prothrombin monitoring with a U.S. Food
and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved device is proposed as an alternative to office or laboratory-based
testing.

MEDICAL CRITERIA
Not applicable

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION
Not applicable

POLICY STATEMENT
BlueCHiP for Medicare and Commercial Products
At-home monitoring of chronic warfarin therapy may be considered medically necessary in patients who
require continuous anticoagulation for chronic medical conditions. These conditions include, but are not
limited to, patients with mechanical heart valves and chronic atrial fibrillation.

COVERAGE
Benefits may vary between groups/contracts. Please refer to the appropriate Benefit Booklet, Evidence of
Coverage, or Subscriber Agreement for applicable coverage/benefits:

- G0248 covered under applicable office visit coverage
- G0249 covered under applicable lab coverage
- G0250 covered under applicable physician services with no co-payment

BACKGROUND
Warfarin is an effective anticoagulant for the treatment and prevention of venous and arterial thrombosis.
Chronic warfarin therapy is recommended in all patients with mechanical heart valves and in some patients
with chronic atrial fibrillation (i.e., patients with risk factors that indicate a higher likelihood of stroke).
Patients with mechanical heart valves are frequently prescribed anticoagulants at higher levels than patients
given anticoagulants for other indications, which puts them at higher risk of complications from warfarin
therapy. Appropriate levels of warfarin anticoagulation are monitored with periodic prothrombin time
measurements, as measured by the International Normalized Ratio (INR). For example, an INR result greater
than 3 indicates a higher risk of serious hemorrhage, while an INR of 6 indicates an increased risk of
developing a serious bleed nearly 7 times that of someone with an INR less than 3. In contrast, an INR less
than 2 is associated with an increased risk of stroke. Therefore, monitoring of the prothrombin time is
recommended to ensure that the prescribed dosing regimens result in INRs within the therapeutic range.
Anticoagulation can be monitored: in the physician’s office (usually once a month), at an anticoagulation
clinic (usually once every 2 to 3 weeks), or at home.

In order for home prothrombin time monitoring to be effective, patients need to be appropriately trained and
able to generate INR test results comparable to laboratory measures. Moreover, the clinical impact of home
prothrombin time monitoring is related to improved warfarin management. Specifically, home prothrombin time monitoring permits more frequent monitoring and self-management of warfarin therapy with the ultimate goal of 1) increasing the time that the anticoagulation is within a therapeutic INR range (intermediate health outcome); and 2) decreasing the incidence of thromboembolic or hemorrhagic events (final health outcome). Home self-monitoring is typically associated with some form of self-management of warfarin therapy. In some cases, the patient may be supplied with treatment algorithms and instructed to alter the dose based on the results of self-monitoring. In other cases, the patient may be instructed to provide the results of the self-monitoring (e.g., on the telephone or internet) and receive instructions on warfarin dosage.

In January 2007, the CoaguChek® XS System (patient self-testing) (Roche Diagnostics Corporation) was cleared for marketing by the FDA through the 510(k) process. The FDA determined that this device was substantially equivalent to existing devices, including the CoaguChek SX System (professional, cleared in 2006). Other than a labeling change, the device is identical to the professional version of the CoaguChek XS System. The patient self-testing system is intended for self-monitoring of prothrombin time in patients who are on a stable regimen of anticoagulation medications. Other devices cleared by the FDA for home prothrombin time monitoring include the ProTime® Microcoagulation System (International Technidyne Corporation) and the Alere™ (formerly Hemosense) INRatio® 2 PT/INR Monitoring System.

CODING
BlueCHiP for Medicare and Commercial Products
The following codes are separately reimbursed services:

G0248  Demonstration, prior to initiation, of home INR monitoring for patient with either mechanical heart valve(s), chronic atrial fibrillation, or venous thromboembolism who meets Medicare coverage criteria, under the direction of a physician; includes: face-to-face demonstration of use and care of the INR monitor, obtaining at least one blood sample, provision of instructions for reporting home INR test results, and documentation of patient’s ability to perform testing and report results

G0249  Provision of test materials and equipment for home INR monitoring of patient with either mechanical heart valve(s), chronic atrial fibrillation, or venous thromboembolism who meets Medicare coverage criteria; includes provision of materials for use in the home and reporting of test results to physician; testing not occurring more frequently than once a week; testing materials, billing units of service include 4 tests

The following code is a separately reimbursed service and should only be reported by physicians:

G0250  Physician review, interpretation, and patient management of home INR testing for patient with either mechanical heart valve(s), chronic atrial fibrillation, or venous thromboembolism who meets Medicare coverage criteria; testing not occurring more frequently than once a week; testing materials, billing units of service include 4 tests

ICD-10 Diagnosis Codes that may support medical necessity:

ICD 10 Codes Med
Nec for Home PT Mo

RELATED POLICIES
Not applicable

PUBLISHED
Provider Update, July 2018
Provider Update, June 2017
Provider Update, June 2016
Provider Update, April 2015
Provider Update, June 2014
REFERENCES