Prospective review is recommended/required. Please check the member agreement for preauthorization guidelines.

Prospective review is not required.

POLICY

Description:
Mobile outpatient cardiac telemetry (MOCT), also called home-based, real-time cardiac surveillance, uses an automatic arrhythmia detector and cellular telephone transmission to automatically transmit abnormal EKG waveforms to the remote monitoring center immediately. The device has an extended memory capable of storing up to 72 hours of EKG waveforms. The EKG results are transmitted to a remote monitoring center when an EKG threshold is exceeded, if the patient initiates a call, and at the end of each day. The patient's physician receives both urgent and daily reports which allow for timely intervention. In addition, this system provides an analysis and report of 24 hours of monitoring, similar to Holter studies. Therefore, the concomitant use of cardiac surveillance, Holter monitoring, and/or event monitoring would not be necessary.

Potential uses of MOCT include diagnosis of previously unrecognized arrhythmias, ascertainment of cause of symptoms, and initiation or adjustment of antiarrhythmic drug therapy. This type of testing may be useful for detection and diagnosis of arrhythmias that occur, which are infrequent and for which Holter monitoring, office or emergency room monitoring, or other shorter-term monitoring techniques are not useful.

The mobile outpatient cardiac telemetry provider must have:

- twenty-four-hour coverage available all days of the year (not just during normal office hours);
- an experienced EKG technician available continuously and the technician must have the capability to dispatch aid to the patient in case of emergency; and
- a physician must be readily available to review and interpret tracings, to immediately contact the attending physician, and to supply a written report.

Mobile outpatient cardiac telemetry is considered not medically necessary as a diagnostic alternative in patients who experience infrequent symptoms (less frequently than every 48 hours) suggestive of cardiac arrhythmias (i.e., palpitations, dizziness, presyncope, or syncope). MCOT is considered not medically necessary because the clinical (health) outcomes with this technology have not been shown to be superior to other available approaches, yet outpatient cardiac telemetry is generally more costly than those alternative approaches.

Medical Criteria:
Not applicable.

Policy:
Coverage for MOCT is considered medically necessary for BlueCHiP for Medicare members and is considered not medically necessary for all other members as there is a lack of peer-reviewed published reports of prospective clinical trials of the effectiveness of this service in improving clinical outcomes.

No preauthorization is required. Participating providers must notify members for whom this procedure is considered not medically necessary in writing that MOCT is a non-covered service. Members may not be billed for MOCT services without advance written notice that this is a non-covered service.

NOTE: Medicare policy is developed separately from BCBSRI policy. Medicare policy incorporates scientific evidence with local expert opinion, and consideration of governmental regulations from CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services), such as national coverage determinations or local coverage determinations. and the US Congress. BCBSRI policy is based upon peer-reviewed, scientifically controlled studies in the literature which demonstrate the superior health outcome of a service or treatment. In addition to benefit differences, CMS may reach different conclusions regarding the scientific evidence than does BCBSRI. BCBSRI and Medicare policies may differ; however, our BlueCHiP for Medicare members must be offered, at least, the same services as Medicare offers. (In some, but not all instances, BCBSRI offers more benefits than does Medicare).

This system is also NOT indicated for use as a screening tool.

Monitoring is not expected to exceed 21 consecutive days and is expected to not be reported more than twice in a twelve month period.

Coverage:
For BlueCHiP for Medicare members, please refer to the member certificate, subscriber agreement, or benefit booklet for applicable machine test coverage/benefits. For all other members, please refer to the section regarding not medically necessary services/devices.

Coding:
The following codes are covered for BC for Medicare only and not medically necessary for all other products:
93228
93229

Also Known As:
Home-based, real-time cardiac surveillance
CardioNet Mobile Surveillance Outpatient Telemetry Service
Lifewatch® 30-day, 24-hour attended telephone monitoring service
HEARTLink II™ Health Monitoring Services of America, Inc.

Related Topics:
Event monitoring
Holter monitoring

Published:
Provider Update, September 2008
Provider Update, December 2009
Provider Update, January 2011
Provider Update, January 2012

References:
Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association Medical Policy Reference Manual, Policy No. 2.02.08
Ambulatory Event Monitors and Mobile Cardiac Outpatient Telemetry.

This medical policy is made available to you for informational purposes only. It is not a guarantee of payment or a substitute for your medical judgment in the treatment of your patients. Benefits and eligibility are determined by the member's subscriber agreement or member certificate and/or the employer agreement, and those documents will supersede the provisions of this medical policy. For information on member-specific benefits, call the provider call center. If you provide services to a member which are determined to not be medically necessary (or in some cases medically necessary services which are non-covered benefits), you may not charge the member for the services unless you have informed the member and they have agreed in writing in advance to continue with the treatment at their own expense. Please refer to your participation agreement(s) for the applicable provisions. This policy is current at the time of publication; however, medical practices, technology, and knowledge are constantly changing. BCBSRI reserves the right to review and revise this policy for any reason and at any time, with or without notice.