

Coding Directive: Interpretation of Diagnostic Radiology and Other Diagnostic Tests

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This directive is to clarify the guidelines from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) regarding Teaching Physicians and interpretation of diagnostic radiology and other diagnostic tests.

The services performed by the teaching physician should be meaningful from the point of affecting the course of treatment and not merely a common review of the report for purposes of authorization and billing.

If a resident is involved in interpreting a diagnostic radiology test or other diagnostic test (e.g. pathology, EEG, EMG, NCV, etc.), the teaching physician must review the resident's interpretation.

CMS Requirements

"Medicare pays for the interpretation of diagnostic radiology and other diagnostic tests if the interpretation is performed or reviewed with a teaching physician. If the teaching physician's signature is the only signature on the interpretation, Medicare assumes that he/she is indicating that he/she personally performed the interpretation. If a resident prepares and signs the interpretation, the teaching physician must indicate that he/she has personally reviewed the image and the resident's interpretation and either agrees with it or edits the findings. Medicare does not pay for an interpretation if the teaching physician only countersigns the resident's interpretation."

The teaching physician must **review and revise** the interpretation as necessary prior to the release of the report.

Examples of Acceptable Documentation:

- "Reviewed and interpreted by..."
- CU Medicine's approved smart phrase recommended for use is: **.upiinterpretation.**

@TD@

*I personally reviewed Dr. ***'s interpretation of the diagnostic {interpretation list25879} and {attestation agree:196001::"agree"} with the interpretation as documented. Pertinent findings included: *** @MEMD@*

A co-signature only by the teaching physician **is not acceptable documentation** for billing an interpretation.

Note: Any physician signing for another physician's dictation reflecting a diagnosis assumes responsibility for the entire content of the interpretation and thereby assumes liability in the event an incorrect diagnosis has been made. Therefore, it is important that in this capacity the signing physician review the original films or pathologic findings as part of the process.

References:

<https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Transmittals/downloads/R2303CP.pdf>