COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

PHYSICIAN REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAMS

PHYSICIAN REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

JULY 1, 2022 TO JUNE 30, 2025

I. POLICY STATEMENT

THE PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY IS TO ENSURE THE COUNTY'S CONFORMANCE WITH STATUTORY AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS, AND TO ADDRESS PRIORITIES OF THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM WHICH ARE CRITICAL TO PROVIDING FOR THE MEDICAL NEEDS OF THE INDIGENT POPULATION, WITHIN THE LEVEL OF AVAILABLE FUNDS.

II. GENERAL RULES

A. Official County Fee Schedule: The Official County Fee Schedule is used to determine reimbursement rates for eligible physician claims. The Official County Fee Schedule, which establishes rates of reimbursement deemed appropriate by the County utilizes the most current Physicians' Current Procedural Terminology ("CPT-4") codes which coincides with the current Resource Based Relative Values Scale ("RBRVS") unit values and a County-determined weighted average conversion factor. The conversion factor for all medical procedures except anesthesiology is $79.49 per relative unit value. The conversion factor for anesthesiology procedures is $48.77 per relative unit value. Reimbursement is also limited to the policy parameters contained herein.

B. Eligible Period: Reimbursement shall be for emergency medical services provided on the calendar day on which emergency services are first provided and on the immediately following two calendar days.

EXCEPTION: Trauma physicians providing trauma services at County contract trauma hospitals may bill for trauma physician services provided beyond this period.

C. Medi-Cal/Medicare Exclusions:

1. Procedures which are not covered in the Medi-Cal Program's Schedule of Maximum Allowances ("SMA") are excluded from reimbursement.

2. Procedures which are covered in Medi-Cal's SMA but require a Treatment Authorization Request ("TAR") are excluded from reimbursement; however, will be considered upon appeal and/or provision of applicable operative and/or pathology reports.

D. Screening Exams: Payment will be made for emergency department medical screening examinations required by law to determine whether an emergency condition exists.

E. Assistant Surgeons: Reimbursement for assistant surgeons will be at a rate of 16% of the primary surgeon's fee.

F. Multiple Surgery Procedure Codes: Adjudication of claims involving multiple surgery procedure codes performed in an inpatient operating room requires submission of operative reports. No more than five (5) Procedure Codes shall be paid as follows: 100% for 1st Procedure and 50% for the 2nd through 5th Procedures.

G. Nurse Practitioner and Physician's Assistant Services: Physicians and surgeons shall be eligible to receive payment for patient care services provided by, or in conjunction with, a properly credentialed nurse practitioner or physician's assistant for care rendered under the direct supervision of a physician and surgeon who is present in the facility where the patient is being treated and who is available for immediate consultation. Payment shall be limited to those claims that are substantiated by a medical record and that have been reviewed and countersigned by the supervising physician and surgeon in accordance with regulations established for the supervision of nurse practitioners and physician's assistants in California.

III. INELIGIBLE CLAIMS

A. Duplicate Procedures: Claims which include duplicate procedures provided to the same patient for the same episode of care are generally excluded from reimbursement. This does not apply for Evaluation & Management codes billed by separate physicians.

B. Unlisted Procedures: Procedures which are not listed in the Official County Fee Schedule are excluded from reimbursement.

C. Non-physician Procedures: Procedures commonly not performed by a physician will be denied (e.g., venipuncture). Claims will be reviewed and considered on appeal only.

D. Insurance Rejections: Claims for patients with potential insurance or other third-party payer coverage will be denied unless a notice of rejection from the insurance company or other third-party payer is provided to the County. The rejection notice should indicate either (1) the patient is not a covered beneficiary or (2) the term of coverage expired prior to the date of the claimed service. If insurance or other third-party coverage has been denied for other reasons, e.g., the deductible has not been met, the type or scope of service has been classified as a nonemergency, or other similar issues denying insurance coverage, the claim will be denied. Where limited insurance policies have been exhausted by hospital billings, physician claims will be reviewed and considered on appeal.

IV. EXCLUSIONS

A. Radiology/Nuclear Medicine (Codes 70002 - 79499): Reimbursement for radiology codes will be limited to readings performed while the patient is in the emergency department or other eligible site. Additionally, payment will only be made for the first radiology claim received by the County per patient per episode of care. Subsequent radiology claims for the same patient/episode will be denied.

B. EKG (Code 93010): Reimbursement for EKG codes will only be made for the first EKG claim received by the County per patient per episode of care. Subsequent EKG claims for the same patient/episode will be denied.

C. Pathology (Codes 80104 - 89999): Reimbursement for pathology codes will be limited to codes 86077, 86078, and 86079. Additionally, codes 88329, 88331, and 88332 will be reimbursed only if the pathologist is on site and pathology services are requested by the surgeon.

D. Surgery (Codes 10000 - 69979): There are no exclusions as long as the procedure is covered in Medi-Cal's SMA and does not require a TAR (see Medi-Cal Exclusions in section A. above).

E. Anesthesia: There are no exclusions as long as the procedure is covered in Medi-Cal's SMA and does not require a TAR (see Medi-Cal Exclusions in section A. above).

F. Modifiers: Reimbursement is excluded for all modifiers except radiology.

G. Prior Dx Codes: Reimbursement will not be made for wound checks and suture removal.

H. Critical Care (Codes 99291 and 99292): Reimbursement will not be made on critical care codes after the first 24 hours of service.

I. Newborn Care (Inpatient Code 99431 and Emergency Department Code 99283): Reimbursement will only be made once for the same recipient by any provider and only if accompanied by a Medi-Cal denial. V30 through V30.2 codes are reimbursable only if a copy of Medi-Cal denial is provided.

V. ADDITIONAL EXCLUSIONS

Upon approval of the Board of Supervisors, the County may revise the Physician Reimbursement Polices from time to time as necessary or appropriate.

VI. APPEALS

Appeals for claims rejected or denied may be submitted to the Physician Reimbursement Advisory Committee ("PRAC"), a committee of physicians selected by Hospital Council of Southern California and by the Los Angeles County Medical Association. Appeals shall include the PSIP Demographic Data Form, CMS-1500, operative reports, if applicable, and supporting documents as needed. Appeals shall be mailed to the contracted Claims Adjudicator:

American Insurance Administrators (AIA)
P.O. BOX 17908
Los Angeles, CA 90017-0908
ATTN: APPEALS UNIT
E-Mail: AIALAPSIP@MAPINC.COM
FAX #: (562) 692-8689