

GENERAL PREAMBLE

CONSULTATIONS

CONSULTATION

Definition/Required elements of service:

A consultation is an assessment rendered following a written request from a referring physician or *nurse practitioner* who, in light of his/her professional knowledge of the patient, requests the opinion of a physician (the "consultant physician") competent to give advice in this field because of the complexity, seriousness, or obscurity of the case, or because another opinion is requested by the patient or *patient's representative*.

[Commentary:

1. The referring physician or *nurse practitioner* must determine if multiple requests by a patient or the *patient's representative* to different physicians in the same specialty for the same condition are medically necessary. Services that are not medically necessary are uninsured.
2. If the physician rendering the service requests a referring physician or *nurse practitioner* to submit a consultation request for that service after the service has been provided, a consultation is not payable. The visit fee appropriate to the service rendered may be claimed.
3. Where a physician who has been paid for a consultation for the patient for the same diagnosis makes a request for a *referral* for ongoing management of the patient, the service rendered following the *referral* is **not payable** as a consultation.]

A consultation includes the services necessary to enable the consultant to prepare a written report (including findings, opinions, and recommendations) to the referring physician or *nurse practitioner*. Where the *referral* is made by a *nurse practitioner*, the consultant shall provide the report to the *nurse practitioner* and the patient's primary care provider, if applicable. Except where otherwise specified, the consultant is required to perform a general, specific or medical specific assessment, including a review of all relevant data.

The following are additional requirements for a consultation:

- a. A copy of the written request for the consultation, signed by the referring physician or *nurse practitioner* must be kept in the consulting physician's medical record, except in the case of a consultation which occurs in a hospital, long-term care institution or multi-specialty clinic where common medical records are maintained. In such cases, the written request may be contained on the common medical record.
- b. The request identifies the consultant by name, the referring physician or *nurse practitioner* by name and billing number, and identifies the patient by name and health number.
- c. The written request sets out the information relevant to the *referral* and specifies the service(s) required.

In the event these requirements are not met, the amount payable for a consultation will be reduced to a lesser assessment fee.

[Commentary:

The request would ordinarily also include the appointment date and appropriate clinical information, such as the reason for the *referral* for consultation, present and past history, physical findings and relevant test results and reports.]

Payment rules:

1. Where a consultant is requested by a resident or intern to perform a consultation, the amount payable for the service will be adjusted to the amount payable for a general or specific assessment, depending upon the specialty of the consultant.
2. Consultations, except for repeat consultations (as described immediately below), are limited to one per *12 month period* unless the same patient is referred to the same consultant a second time within the same *12 month period* with a clearly defined unrelated diagnosis in which case the limit is increased to two per *12 month period*. The amount payable for consultations in excess of these limits will be adjusted to the amount payable for a general or specific assessment, depending upon the specialty of the consultant.

Note:

In the preoperative preparation of a patient undergoing the following low risk elective surgical procedures under local anaesthesia and/or I.V. sedation, a preoperative consultation by any physician is *only eligible for payment* where the medical record demonstrates the consultation is medically necessary.

1. cataract surgery;
2. colonoscopy;
3. cystoscopy;
4. carpal tunnel surgery; or
5. arthroscopic surgery

[Commentary:

Such medically necessary consultations would be very uncommon.]