

Lab: Controlled Substance Monitoring and Drugs of Abuse Testing

CPT: 80305, 80306, 80307, G0480, G0481, G0482, G0483, G0659, 0143U, 0144U, 0145U, 0146U, 0147U, 0148U, 0149U, 0150U, 0227U

CMS Policy for Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia

Local policies are determined by the performing test location. This is determined by the state in which your performing laboratory resides and where your testing is commonly performed.

Medically Supportive ICD Codes are listed on subsequent page(s) of this document.

Coverage Indications, Limitations, and/or Medical Necessity

Purpose - Urine drug testing (UDT) provides objective information to assist clinicians in identifying the presence or absence of drugs or drug classes in the body and making treatment decisions. This policy details:

- The appropriate indications and expected frequency of testing for safe medication management of prescribed substances in risk stratified pain management patients and/or in identifying and treating substance use disorders.
- Designates documentation, by the clinician caring for the beneficiary in the beneficiary's medical record, of medical necessity for, and testing ordered on an individual patient basis;
- Provides an overview of presumptive urine drug testing (UDT) and definitive UDT testing by various methodologies.
- This policy addresses UDT for Medicare patients only.

Definitions As used in this document, the following terminology relates to the basic forms of UDT:

1. **Presumptive/Qualitative Drug Testing** (hereafter called "presumptive" UDT) - Used when medically necessary to determine the presence or absence of drugs or drug classes in a urine sample; results expressed as negative or positive or as a numerical result; includes competitive immunoassays (IA) and thin layer chromatography.
2. **Definitive/Quantitative/Confirmation** (hereafter called "definitive" UDT) - Used when medically necessary to identify specific medications, illicit substances and metabolites; reports the results of analytes absent or present typically in concentrations such as ng/mL; definitive methods include, but are not limited to GC-MS and LC-MS/MS testing methods.
3. **Specimen Validity Testing** - Urine specimen testing to ensure that it is consistent with normal human urine and has not been adulterated or substituted, may include, but is not limited to pH, specific gravity, oxidants and creatinine.
4. **Immunoassay (IA)** - Ordered by clinicians primarily to identify the presence or absence of drug classes and some specific drugs; biochemical tests that measure the presence above a cutoff level of a substance (drug) with the use of an antibody; read by photometric technology.
5. **Point of Care Testing (POCT)** - Used when medically necessary by clinicians caring for the beneficiary for immediate test results for the immediate management of the beneficiary; available when the beneficiary and physician are in the same location; IA test method that primarily identifies drug classes and a few specific drugs; platform consists of cups, dipsticks, cassettes, or strips; read by the human eye, or read by instrument assisted direct optical observation.
6. **Standing Orders** - Test request for a specific patient representing repetitive testing to monitor a condition or disease for a limited number of sequential visits; individualized orders for certain patients for pre-determined tests based on historical use, risk and community trend patient profiles; clinician can alter the standing order. Note: A "profile" differs from a "panel" in that a profile responds to the clinical risks of a particular patient, whereas a panel may encourage unnecessary or excessive testing when no clinical cause exists for many of the tests.
7. **Blanket Orders** - Test request that is not for a specific patient; rather, it is an identical order for all patients in a clinician's practice without individualized decision making at every visit.
8. **Reflex Testing** - Laboratory testing that is performed "reflexively" after initial test results to identify further diagnostic information essential to patient care. This testing is not based on a specific physician's order. Testing performed as a step necessary to complete a physician's order is not considered reflex testing.

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CMS Policy for Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia (continued)

Drug Test Methods

The Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) regulates laboratory testing and requires clinical labs to be certified by their State as well as the CMS before they can accept human samples for diagnostic testing. Multiple types of CLIA certificates may be obtained based on the complexity of testing a lab conducts. CLIA levels of complexity (CLIA-waived, moderate complexity and high complexity) are addressed only as they relate to the HCPCS code description and the coding/billing guidance to be attached to this document.

A. Presumptive Testing Methods:

1. Presumptive UDT: Presumptive UDT consist of various platforms including cards, dipsticks, cassettes and cups based on qualitative competitive immunoassay methodology with one or more analytes in the test. A presumptive IA test detects the presence of the amount of drug/substance present in urine above a predetermined “cut-off” value, and may be read by direct optical observation or by instrument assisted direct optical observation. A positive test result is reported when the concentration of drug is above the cutoff; a negative is reported when the concentration of drug is below the cut-off. Positive test results are presumptive but not necessarily definitive due to sensitivity and cross-reactivity limitations. Negative test results do not necessarily indicate the absence of a drug or substance in the urine specimen. The accuracy of the results of a presumptive UDT will depend on the testing environment, type of test, and training of the individual conducting the test. This type of test should only be used when results are needed immediately.

2. Presumptive UDT by Instrumented Chemistry Analyzers: Chemistry analyzers with IA UDT technology can be used in an office or clinical laboratory setting. This test may be used when less immediate test results are required. At no time is IA technology by chemistry analyzer analysis considered confirmatory (definitive) testing. A presumptive positive IA test detects the presence of a drug/substance in urine at or above the “cut-off” value. If the concentration of the drug is below the cut-off, the result will be negative. Presumptive positive tests are not always true positives due to sensitivity, specificity, and cross-reactivity limitations. Negative test results do not necessarily indicate the absence of a drug or substance in the urine specimen. FDA approved/cleared test platforms are available in the marketplace as well as, laboratory developed tests (LDTs) such as modified FDA approved/ cleared and non-FDA approved/cleared platforms and/or reagents. LDTs generally have been modified to test at a lower cutoff in order to detect substances that would have been missed at a higher cutoff. For example, a FDA labeled cutoff may be 300 ng/mL and the LDT cutoff for the same drug may be a 100 ng/mL. Presumptive UDT can be carried out at any validated cut-off concentration. Lowering of the cut-off concentration provides more stringent cutoffs for illicit drugs. LDTs may include non-FDA cleared tests not available in CLIA-waived or moderate complexity tests (e.g. tramadol, tapentadol, carisoprodol, fentanyl, zolpidem). Lowering the cutoff increases the possibility of detecting a drug when the test has been modified from the recipe of the manufacturer.

3. Limitations of Presumptive UDT: Presumptive UDT testing is limited due to:

- Primarily screens for drug classes rather than specific drugs, and therefore, the practitioner may not be able to determine if a different drug within the same class is causing the positive result;
 - Produces erroneous results due to cross-reactivity with other compounds or does not detect all drugs within a drug class;
- Given that not all prescription medications or synthetic/analog drugs are detectable and/or have assays available, it is unclear as to whether other drugs are present when some tests are reported as positive;
- Cut-off may be too high to detect presence of a drug

This information could cause a practitioner to make an erroneous assumption or clinical decision.

In summary, presumptive IA UDT is often unable to identify specific drugs within many drug classes, particularly within the amphetamine, barbiturate, benzodiazepine, tricyclic antidepressants, and opiate/opioid drug classes. Drugs such as buprenorphine, amphetamines, benzodiazepines, and cocaine/heroin yield false negative IA results due to low cross-reactivity or non-reactivity and drugs such as fentanyl, carisoprodol, tramadol, tapentadol and synthetic designer drugs cannot be detected by presumptive IA. Therefore, it may be medically necessary for clinicians to utilize definitive UDT when the presumptive tests for these drugs are negative.

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CMS Policy for Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia (continued)

B. Definitive UDT:

Gas Chromatography coupled with Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS) and Liquid Chromatography coupled with Mass Spectrometry (LC-MS/MS) are complex technologies that use the separation capabilities of gaseous or liquid chromatography with the analytical capabilities of mass spectrometry. These methodologies require the competency of on-site highly trained experts in this technology and interpretation of results. While these tests require different sample preparation and analytical runs, they identify specific drugs, metabolites, and most illicit substances and report the results as absent or present typically in concentrations of ng/mL. Quantification should not be used to determine adherence with a specific dosage or time of dose of a pain medication or illicit drug for clinical purposes. Rather, the use of quantitative drug data may be important for many reasons such as in a differential patient assessment. For example, when several opioids are present in the urine of a patient prescribed a single opioid, quantification may help the clinician decide whether the presence of the other opioids is consistent with metabolism of the prescribed opioid, opioid contamination during manufacturing, or if more than one drug within a class is being used. Quantification may also provide information in the setting of illicit drug use. Serial creatinine-corrected quantitative values may assist in the differential assessment of ongoing drug use or cessation of drug use with continued drug excretion.

1. GC-MS

GC-MS can only be performed on molecules that are volatile. If the test drug is not volatile in its own right, it must be modified or derivatized to a volatile form. To derivatize, the test drug must be extracted from the urine, eluted from the extraction device, concentrated, and then reacted with a chemical reagent to make a volatile product. Each drug class may require a different derivatizing agent. For patients on multiple classes of medications, laboratories using GC procedures must make different volatile derivatives in order to perform comprehensive testing. Since a GC column may not be able to separate more than one class of compounds, multiple chromatographic runs on different column types may be required to monitor multiple drug classes. Newer GC-MS instruments often use tandem systems. GC-MS methodology allows for the testing of multiple substances but differs in ease of run.

2. LC-MS/MS

LC-MS/MS is roughly 100 times more sensitive and selective, involves less human steps, provides quicker turn-around time, uses less specimen volume and can test for a larger number of substances simultaneously when compared to GC-MS. After sample preparation, it is injected into the LC-MS/MS. The sample has to undergo hydrolysis to break the glucuronide bond that frees the drug and drug metabolites. Hydrolysis is followed by multiple additional steps including protein precipitation, centrifugation and purification. Deuterium-labeled isotopic internal standards are added to quantify the drugs and drug metabolites. The sample is injected when the mobile phase is flowing through the chromatographic column. Each drug and drug metabolite interacts with the mobile phase and stationary phase differently and moves at different speeds depending on their chemical properties. In other words, each analyte elutes at different times. Specific drugs and metabolites are identified by their retention time and quantified against isotopic internal standards for each drug and metabolite. Each drug peak has to be compared to drug standards (calibrators) in order to ensure identification.

Purpose of UDT:

Presumptive UDT may be ordered by the clinician caring for a beneficiary when it is necessary to rapidly obtain and/or integrate results into clinical assessment and treatment decisions.

Definitive UDT is reasonable and necessary for the following circumstances: * Identify a specific substance or metabolite that is inadequately detected by a presumptive UDT; * Definitively identify specific drugs in a large family of drugs; * Identify a specific substance or metabolite that is not detected by presumptive UDT such as fentanyl, meperidine, synthetic cannabinoids and other synthetic/analog drugs; * Identify drugs when a definitive concentration of a drug is needed to guide management (e.g., discontinuation of THC use according to a treatment plan); * Identify a negative, or confirm a positive, presumptive UDT result that is inconsistent with a patient's self-report, presentation, medical history, or current prescribed pain medication plan; * Rule out an error as the cause of a presumptive UDT result; * Identify non-prescribed medication or illicit use for ongoing safe prescribing of controlled substances; and * Use in a differential assessment of medication efficacy, side effects, or drug-drug interactions.

Definitive UDT may be reasonable and necessary based on patient specific indications, including historical use, medication response, and clinical assessment, when accurate results are necessary to make clinical decisions. The clinician's rationale for the definitive UDT and the tests ordered must be documented in the patient's medical record.

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CMS Policy for Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia (continued)

Drug Testing Panels

A. Presumptive UDT Panels

Presumptive UDT testing typically involves testing for multiple analytes based on the beneficiary's clinical history and risk assessment, and must be documented in the medical record.

B. Definitive UDT Panels

Physician-directed definitive profile testing is reasonable and necessary when ordered for a particular patient based upon historical use and community trends. However, the same physician-defined profile is not reasonable and necessary for every patient in a physician's practice. Definitive UDT orders should be individualized based on clinical history and risk assessment, and must be documented in the medical record.

Covered Indications for UDT

Group A – Symptomatic patients, Multiple drug ingestion and/or Patients with unreliable history

A patient who presents in a variety of medical settings with signs or symptoms of substance use toxicity will be treated presumptively to stabilize the patient while awaiting rapid, then definitive testing to determine the cause(s) of the presentation. The need for definitive UDT is based upon rapid test findings, responses to medical interventions, and treatment plan. A presumptive UDT should be performed as part of the evaluation and management of a patient who presents in an urgent care setting with any one of the following:

Coma

- Altered mental status in the absence of a clinically defined toxic syndrome or toxidrome
- Severe or unexplained cardiovascular instability (cardiotoxicity)
- Unexplained metabolic or respiratory acidosis in the absence of a clinically defined toxic syndrome or toxidrome
- Seizures with an undetermined history
- To provide antagonist to specific drug

The presumptive findings, definitive drug tests ordered and reasons for the testing must be documented in the patient's medical record.

Group B - Diagnosis and treatment for substance abuse or dependence

A patient in active treatment for substance use disorder (SUD) or monitoring across different phases of recovery may undergo medical management for a variety of medical conditions. A physician who is writing prescriptions for medications to treat either the SUD or other conditions may need to know if the patient is taking substances which can interact with prescribed medications or taking prescribed medications as expected. The risk of drug-drug interactions is inherent to the patient, and may be compounded by prescribed medications. UDT is a medically necessary and useful component of chemical dependency diagnosis and treatment. The UDT result influences treatment and level of care decisions. Ordered tests and testing methods (presumptive and/or definitive) must match the stage of screening, treatment, or recovery; the documented history; and Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM V) diagnosis. For patients with no known indicators of risk for SUDs, the clinician may screen for a broad range of commonly abused drugs using presumptive UDT. For patients with known indicators of risk for SUDs, the clinician may screen for a broad range of commonly abused drugs using definitive UDT.

For patients with a diagnosed SUD, the clinician should perform random UDT, at random intervals in order to properly monitor the patient. Testing profiles must be determined by the clinician based on the following medical necessity guidance criteria:

- * Patient history, physical examination, and previous laboratory findings
- * Stage of treatment or recovery;
- * Suspected abused substance;
- * Substances that may present high risk for additive or synergistic interactions with prescribed medication (e.g., benzodiazepines, alcohol). The patient's medical record must include an appropriate testing frequency based on the stage of screening, treatment, or recovery; the rationale for the drugs/drug classes ordered; and the results must be documented in the medical record and used to direct care.

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Lab: Controlled Substance Monitoring and Drugs of Abuse Testing

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CMS Policy for Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia (continued)

1. Frequency of Presumptive UDT for SUD: The testing frequency must meet medical necessity and be documented in the clinician's medical record.

- a. For patients with 0 to 30 consecutive days of abstinence, presumptive UDT is expected at a frequency of 1 to 3 presumptive UDT per week. More than 3 presumptive panels in one week is not reasonable and necessary and is not covered by Medicare.
- b. For patients with 31 to 90 consecutive days of abstinence, presumptive UDT is expected at a frequency of 1 to 3 UDT per week. More than 3 presumptive UDT in one week is not reasonable and necessary and is not covered by Medicare.
- c. For patients with > 90 consecutive days of abstinence, presumptive UDT is expected at a frequency of 1 to 3 UDT in one month. More than 3 physician-directed UDT in one month is not reasonable and necessary and is not covered by Medicare.

2. Frequency of Definitive UDT for SUD:

Depending on the patient's specific substance use history, definitive UDT to accurately determine the specific drugs in the patient's system may be necessary. Definitive testing may be ordered when accurate and reliable results are necessary to integrate treatment decisions and clinical assessment. The frequency and the rationale for definitive UDT must be documented in the patient's medical record.

- a. For patients with 0 to 30 consecutive days of abstinence, definitive UDT is expected at a frequency not to exceed 1 physician-directed testing profile in one week. More than 1 physician-directed testing profile in one week is not reasonable and necessary and is not covered by Medicare.
- b. For patients with 31 to 90 consecutive days of abstinence, definitive UDT is expected at a frequency of 1-3 physician-directed testing profiles in one month. More than 3 UDT in one month is not reasonable and necessary and is not covered by Medicare.
- c. For patients with > 90 day of consecutive abstinence, definitive UDT is expected at a frequency of 1-3 physician-directed testing profiles in three months. More than 3 definitive UDT in 3 months is not reasonable and necessary and is not covered by Medicare.

Group C - Treatment for patients on chronic opioid therapy (COT).

A physician who is writing prescriptions for medications to treat chronic pain can manage a patient better if the physician knows whether the patient is consuming another medication or substance, which could suggest the possibility of SUD or lead to drug-drug interactions. Additionally, UDT may help the physician monitor for medication adherence, diversion, efficacy, side effects, and patient safety in general.

1. COT UDT Testing Objectives:

- a) Identifies absence of prescribed medication and potential for abuse, misuse, and diversion;
- b) Identifies undisclosed substances, such as alcohol, unsanctioned prescription medication, or illicit substances;
- c) Identifies substances that contribute to adverse events or drug-drug interactions;
- d) Provides objectivity to the treatment plan;
- e) Reinforces therapeutic compliance with the patient;
- f) Provides additional documentation demonstrating compliance with patient evaluation and monitoring;
- g) Provide diagnostic information to help assess individual patient response to medications (e.g., metabolism, side effects, drug-drug interaction, etc.) over time for ongoing management of prescribed medications.

Medical Necessity Guidance:

Criteria to establish medical necessity for drug testing must be based on patient-specific elements identified during the clinical assessment, and documented by the clinician in the patient's medical record and minimally include the following elements:

- * Patient history, physical examination and previous laboratory findings;
- * Current treatment plan;
- * Prescribed medication(s)
- * Risk assessment plan

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CMS Policy for Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia (continued)

National pain organizations, physician societies, and the Federation of State Medical Boards recommend a practical approach to definitive UDT for COT. Frequency of testing beyond the baseline presumptive UDT must be based on individual patient needs substantiated by documentation in the patient's medical record. Recommendations for the ordering of presumptive and definitive UDT for patients on COT are as follows:

COT Baseline Testing: Initial presumptive and/or definitive COT patient testing may include amphetamine/ methamphetamine, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, cocaine, methadone, oxycodone, tricyclic antidepressants, tetrahydrocannabinol, opioids, opiates, heroin, and synthetic/analog or "designer" drugs.

COT Monitoring Testing: Ongoing testing may be medically reasonable and necessary based on the patient history, clinical assessment, including medication side effects or inefficacy, suspicious behaviors, self-escalation of dose, doctor-shopping, indications/symptoms of illegal drug use, evidence of diversion, or other clinician documented change in affect or behavioral pattern. The frequency of testing must be based on a complete clinical assessment of the individual's risk potential for abuse and diversion using a validated risk assessment interview or questionnaire and should include the patient's response to prescribed medications and the side effects of medications. The clinician should perform random UDT at random intervals, in order to properly monitor a patient. UDT testing does not have to be associated with an office visit. Patients with specific symptoms of medication aberrant behavior or misuse may be tested in accordance with this document's guidance for monitoring patient adherence and compliance during active treatment (<90 days) for substance use or dependence.

3. UDT Frequency Based on Validated Risk Assessment and Stratification*:

Testing must be based on clinician's documented medical necessity and reviewed by the clinician in the management of prescribing/renewing a controlled substance for every risk group outlined below.

Low Risk - Prior to initiation of COT - Random testing 1-2 times every 12 months for prescribed medications, non-prescribed medications that may pose a safety risk if taken with prescribed medications, and illicit substances based on patient history, clinical presentation and/or community usage.

Moderate Risk – Prior to initiation of COT – Random testing 1-2 times every 6 months for prescription medications, non-prescribed medication that may pose a safety risk if taken with prescribed medications, and illicit substances, based on patient history, clinical presentation, and/or usage.

High Risk – Prior to initiation of COT – Random testing performed 1-3 times every 3 months for prescription medications, non-prescribed medication that may pose a safety risk if taken with prescribed medications, and illicit substances, based on patient history, clinical presentation, and/or usage.

***Note:** Any additional definitive UDT beyond recommendations above must be justified by the clinician in the medical record in situations in which changes in prescribed medications may be needed, such as:

- Patient response to prescribed medication suddenly changes
- * Patient side effect profile changes
- * To assess for possible drug-drug interactions
- * Sudden change in patient's medical condition
- * Patient admits to use of illicit or non-prescribed controlled substance.

Other Covered Services

1. Reflex Testing by Reference Laboratories – since reference laboratories do not have access to patient-specific data, reflex testing under the following circumstances is reasonable and necessary:

- a) To verify a presumptive positive UDT using definitive methods that include, but are not limited to GC-MS or LC-MS/MS before reporting the presumptive finding to the ordering clinician and without an additional order from the clinician; or
- b) To confirm the absence of prescribed medications when a negative result is obtained by presumptive UDT in the laboratory for a prescribed medication listed by the ordering clinician.

2. Direct to definitive UDT without a presumptive UDT is reasonable and necessary, when individualized for a particular patient.

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CMS Policy for Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia (continued)

Definitive testing to confirm a negative presumptive UDT result, upon the order of the clinician, is reasonable and necessary in the following circumstances:

- a. The result is inconsistent with a patient's self-report, presentation, medical history, or current prescribed medication plan (should be present in the sample);
- b. Following a review of clinical findings, the clinician suspects use of a substance that is inadequately detected or not detected by a presumptive UDT; or
- c. To rule out an error as the cause of a negative presumptive UDT result.

Definitive testing to confirm a presumptive UDT positive result, upon the order of the clinician, is reasonable and necessary when the result is inconsistent with the expected result, a patient's self-report, presentation, medical history, or current prescribed medication plan.

Non-Covered Services

1. Blanket Orders
2. Reflex definitive UDT is not reasonable and necessary when presumptive testing is performed at point of care because the clinician may have sufficient information to manage the patient. If the clinician is not satisfied, he/she must determine the clinical appropriateness of and order specific subsequent definitive testing (e.g., the patient admits to using a particular drug, or the IA cut-off is set at such a point that is sufficiently low that the physician is satisfied with the presumptive test result).
3. Routine standing orders for all patients in a physician's practice are not reasonable and necessary.
4. It is not reasonable and necessary for a physician to perform presumptive POCT and order presumptive IA testing from a reference laboratory. In other words, Medicare will only pay for one presumptive test result per patient per date of service regardless of the number of billing provider.
5. It is not reasonable and necessary for a physician to perform presumptive IA testing and order presumptive IA testing from a reference laboratory with or without reflex testing. Medicare will only pay for one presumptive test result per patient per date of service regardless of the number of billing providers.
6. It is not reasonable and necessary for a reference laboratory to perform and bill IA presumptive UDT prior to definitive testing without a specific physician's order for the presumptive testing.
7. IA testing, regardless of whether it is qualitative or semi-quantitative (numerical), may not be used to "confirm" or definitively identify a presumptive test result obtained by cups, dipsticks, cards, cassettes or other IA testing methods. Definitive UDT provides specific identification and/or quantification typically by GC-MS or LC-MS/MS.
8. Drug testing of two different specimen types from the same patient on the same date of service for the same drugs/metabolites/analytes.
9. UDT for medico-legal and/or employment purposes or to protect a physician from drug diversion charges.
10. Specimen validity testing including but not limited to, pH, specific gravity, oxidants, creatinine.

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There is a frequency associated with this test. Please refer to the Limitations or Utilization Guidelines section on previous page(s).

The ICD10 codes listed below are the top diagnosis codes currently utilized by ordering physicians for the limited coverage test highlighted above that are also listed as medically supportive under Medicare’s limited coverage policy. **If you are ordering this test for diagnostic reasons that are not covered under Medicare policy, an Advance Beneficiary Notice form is required.**

**Note—Bolded diagnoses below have the highest utilization*

Code	Description
G89.4	Chronic pain syndrome
Z51.81	Encounter for therapeutic drug level monitoring
Z79.899	Other long term (current) drug therapy

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Disclaimer:

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