

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

CMS Announces VAD Coverage

Medicare will cover ventricular assist devices (VADs) as a destination therapy, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has announced.

Now, CMS only covers VADs as a bridge to heart transplant or as support for blood circulation after open-heart surgery. The new policy will cover the mechanical pumps as permanent cardiac support for certain Medicare beneficiaries.

Medicare will cover the devices for patients with end-stage heart failure who aren't candidates for heart transplantation and who meet the inclusion criteria in the "Randomized Evaluation of Mechanical Assistance for the Treatment of Congestive Heart Failure" trial sponsored by the National Institutes of Health.

Medicare will also increase its per-procedure payments to increase access to VADs.