

<Date>

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<City>, <State> <Zip>

## Radiology Notification Program

- Effective February 15, 2010, UnitedHealthcare will require UnitedHealth Premium Quality and Cost Efficiency designated physicians to complete prior notification for advanced imaging services. UnitedHealthcare will include all network physicians (including Premium Quality and Cost Efficiency designated physicians) in our Radiology Notification Program.
- This change to the Radiology Notification Program does not affect your current UnitedHealth Premium Quality and Cost Efficiency designation status.
- Prior notification will be required for: CT scans, MRIs, MRAs, PET scans, and nuclear medicine studies, including nuclear cardiology.
- Physicians and other health care professionals ordering advanced imaging services should complete prior notification online at [UnitedHealthcareOnline.com](http://UnitedHealthcareOnline.com) > Notifications > Radiology Notification Submission & Status, or by calling toll-free 866-889-8054, or faxing to 866-889-8061. Fax forms can be found on [UnitedHealthcareOnline.com](http://UnitedHealthcareOnline.com).

Inclusion of All Network Physicians (including UnitedHealth Premium<sup>®</sup> Quality and Cost Efficiency Designated Physicians) in the Radiology Notification Program

Dear Practice Manager:

We value our relationship with you, and we appreciate the care you provide to the people we insure. The purpose of this letter is to advise you that UnitedHealthcare is implementing an important change in the commercial Radiology Notification Program.

**Beginning February 15, 2010, UnitedHealthcare will include all network physicians (including Premium Quality and Cost Efficiency designated physicians) in our Radiology Notification Program.** As you know, this program requires prior notification for the following outpatient imaging procedures: CT scans, MRIs, MRAs, PET scans, and nuclear medicine studies, including nuclear cardiology. This change amends page 31 of the UnitedHealthcare Physician, Health Care Professional, Facility and Ancillary Provider 2009 Administrative Guide.

This change is based on our concern for patients who are subject to preventable radiation exposure, the need to improve compliance with evidence-based and professional society guidance in the use of these expensive health care assets, as well as direct feedback from practicing physicians and office managers, who, while appreciating the exemption for UnitedHealth Premium<sup>®</sup> designated physicians, have also reported additional administrative complexity in managing these exemptions. Consequently, UnitedHealthcare will streamline and simplify the program for all stakeholders by having the same administrative requirements for all physicians.

Key drivers of this change include:

- Radiation Exposure – Recent published literature, in addition to concerns expressed by expert external scientific advisors, indicate that advanced imaging procedures are a major and growing source of ionizing radiation in the U.S. and can result in high cumulative levels of radiation for patients. As such, it is important that we address preventable radiation exposure through the Radiology Notification Program.

- Consistency – This change will provide a more consistent application of current scientific clinical evidence and professional society guidance to diagnostic imaging services. It also provides a consistency in operating imaging pre-service programs with other payers and our other network facing companies. This alignment will aid in modifications we anticipate to be made to radiology programs for our government business in 2010. Further details will be shared with you prior to implementation.
- Variation in use of advanced imaging services – We remain excited by and committed to the UnitedHealth Premium designation program which, as you know, evaluates the quality and cost effectiveness of clinical care delivery for 20 specialties. Results to date demonstrate that Premium designated physicians are practicing more efficiently than their peers in a manner consistent with evidence-based guidelines. Unfortunately, in the area of advanced imaging services, Premium physicians have not demonstrated greater efficiency in the use of these services. We remain concerned about the variations that exist in the quality, safety and appropriate utilization of imaging services in health care delivery. As such, for the foreseeable future, Premium designated physicians will be held accountable for compliance with the notification requirement.

Since the inception of the Radiology Notification Program, we have more effectively promoted quality and safety by ensuring efficient utilization of advanced imaging services consistent with evidence based clinical guidelines. The Program has enabled us to provide consumers with access to the right imaging study for the right reason the first time. This patient centered approach ensures the most appropriate intervention is completed to aid in the clinical diagnosis.

As a reminder, advanced imaging services that take place in an emergency room, observation unit, urgent care facility or during an inpatient stay **DO NOT** require notification.

For your convenience, we have enclosed several documents to help you better understand the Radiology Notification Program and its requirements:

- Frequently Asked Questions about the Radiology Notification Program
- Outpatient Radiology Notification Protocol
- Quick Reference Guide to assist your office in administering the Radiology Notification Program

Additional details about the Radiology Notification Program are available on UnitedHealthcare's physician Web site, [UnitedHealthcareOnline.com](http://UnitedHealthcareOnline.com) > Clinician Resources > Radiology > Radiology Notification > Reference Materials.

While we are implementing this enhanced Radiology Notification Program, we will continue to evaluate mechanisms that appropriately and transparently distinguish physicians who demonstrate adherence to evidence based guidelines for ordering advanced imaging services and who could therefore qualify for a reduction in the administrative notification requirements. We are actively consulting with medical societies, experts and our scientific advisory board to assist us in working toward this goal. In the interim, we hope that you will continue to identify opportunities to apply evidence-based guidelines to the ordering of advanced imaging services in your practice.

Finally, we want to share the continuing advantages of being a Premium designated physician. UnitedHealthcare designates physicians who meet either the "quality only" or "quality and cost efficiency" criteria, and publicly recognizes them through designations that employers and members can view in online directories, such as the consumer Web site, [myuhc.com](http://myuhc.com). Employers may offer health benefit programs that provide benefit incentives for members to use UnitedHealth Premium

designated physicians. As a result, there is potential that designated physicians may see an increase in the number of patients accessing their practice. Physicians who meet quality and cost efficiency criteria and who meet the more robust criteria for UnitedHealth Practice Rewards<sup>®</sup> will receive enhanced reimbursement. For more information on the Premium program or Practice Rewards, please visit [UnitedHealthcareOnline.com](http://UnitedHealthcareOnline.com) > Clinician Resources > UnitedHealth Premium.

We appreciate your participation with UnitedHealthcare. If you have notification questions, please contact your UnitedHealthcare Network Management representative, or call 800-637-5792, or email [radiology@customerrelation.com](mailto:radiology@customerrelation.com).

Sincerely,



Laurie Paidosh  
Vice President, Radiology Programs



Sam Ho, M.D.  
Executive Vice President, Chief Medical Officer

Enclosures