Treatment of Prostate Cancer

I. Policy

University Health Alliance (UHA) will reimburse for treatment of prostate cancer when determined to be medically necessary and within the medical criteria guidelines (subject to limitations and exclusions) indicated below.

II. Background

Cancer of the prostate is a monumental public health problem. It is the most common non-dermatologic malignancy in White, Japanese, & Filipino Americans and it is the second most common (after lung cancer) in Chinese and Hawaiians (NCI, SEER data). It ranks in the top four causes of cancer deaths in each of these groups except the Chinese.

Carcinoma of the prostate has generated substantial controversy which has spilled into the public domain. The role of population-based PSA screening has slowly evolved to the point that the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) issued a draft recommendation against routine screening in asymptomatic men in October 2011 and continues this recommendation against screening in the current recommendation May 2012.

Less well known in the lay community is the controversy and uncertainty surrounding how a patient with an established diagnosis of localized prostate cancer should be treated. Age, grade (Gleason score) and PSA level help to guide some decisions (e.g. “no treatment necessary”, “surgery not indicated”) in specific instances. However, for many patients, the choice between therapeutic options is unclear. Surgery (open or robotic), XRT (external beam or by brachytherapy) with or without androgen deprivation or observation without immediate intervention might be of equal or near equal efficacy. Therefore, in a world of direct marketing to patients, complex decision making, significant learning curves for evolving techniques, and significant differences in cure and functional recovery depending upon operator experience, as well as unedited Internet propaganda, payors and members will benefit from a process of systematic and comprehensive informed consent.

III. Criteria/Guidelines

A. UHA requires mandatory evaluation by both a urologic surgeon and a radiation oncologist for all clinical Stage I and II patients and for those clinical Stage III patients who are considered for prostatectomy.
   1. Routine clinical parameters and criteria must be met for diagnosis and staging.
   2. Documentation from both specialists must reflect discussion of therapeutic alternatives and their relative risks and benefits as well as the provider’s personal experience with the specific techniques contemplated.
   3. Surgeons must offer candid insight into both robotic and open procedures and radiation oncologists must discuss external beam therapy as well as brachytherapy.
IV. Limitations/Exclusions

A. NOTE:
This UHA payment policy is a guide to coverage, the need for prior authorization and other administrative directives. It is not meant to provide instruction in the practice of medicine and it should not deter a provider from expressing his/her judgment.

Even though this payment policy may indicate that a particular service or supply is considered covered, specific provider contract terms and/or member’s individual benefit plans may apply, and this policy is not a guarantee of payment. UHA reserves the right to apply this payment policy to all UHA companies and subsidiaries.

UHA understands that opinions about and approaches to clinical problems may vary. Questions concerning medical necessity (see Hawaii Revised Statutes §432E-1.4) are welcome. A provider may request that UHA reconsider the application of the medical necessity criteria in light of any supporting documentation.

V. Administrative Guidelines

A. UHA will require prior authorization for treatment of all operable prostate cancer.

B. UHA requires evaluation by both a urologic surgeon and a radiation oncologist for all clinical Stage I and II patients and for those clinical Stage III patients who are considered for prostatectomy.

C. All of the following documentation must be submitted:
   1. Clinical notes describing symptoms and physical findings and cancer staging; and
   2. Documentation of evidence that the UHA member has been evaluated by both a urologic surgeon and a radiation oncologist, as noted in guidelines above.

D. To request prior authorization, please go to UHA’s website: http://www.uhahealth.com/forms/form_request_auth.pdf and submit it:
   - Via Fax: 1-866-572-4384
   - Via Mail:
     UHA Health Care Services
     700 Bishop Street, Suite 300
     Honolulu, HI 96813

VI. Policy History

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