

SIMULTANEOUS PANCREAS-KIDNEY, PANCREAS-AFTER-KIDNEY, AND PANCREAS-TRANSPLANT-ALONE

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I. CPT¹ PROCEDURE CODES

48170 is a Level III procedure code assigned by TRICARE
48550 - 48556

II. POLICY

A. Benefits are allowed for simultaneous pancreas-kidney transplantation (SPK), pancreas-after-kidney transplantation (PAK), and pancreas-transplantation-alone (PTA).

1. A TRICARE Prime enrollee must have a referral from his/her Primary Care Manager (PCM) and an authorization from the Health Care Finder (HCF) before obtaining transplant-related services. If network providers furnish transplant-related services without prior PCM referral and HCF authorization, penalties will be administered according to TRICARE network provider agreements. If Prime enrollees receive transplant-related services from non-network civilian providers without the required PCM referral and HCF authorization. Managed Care Support (MCS) contractors shall reimburse charges for the services on a Point of Service basis. Special cost-sharing requirements apply to Point of Service claims.

2. For Standard and Extra patients residing in a Managed Care Support (MCS) region, preauthorization authority is the responsibility of the MCS Medical Director, Health Care Finder or other designated utilization staff.

B. Simultaneous pancreas-kidney transplantation (SPK) and pancreas-after-kidney transplantation (PAK) are covered when the transplantation is performed at a Medicare-approved renal transplantation center, for patients who:

1. Are suffering from concomitant, Type I Diabetes Mellitus that is resistant to exogenous therapy and end stage chronic renal disease; and

2. Have exhausted more conservative medical and surgical treatments for Type I Diabetes Mellitus and renal disease.

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TRICARE POLICY MANUAL 6010.54-M, AUGUST 1, 2002

CHAPTER 4, SECTION 24.7

SIMULTANEOUS PANCREAS-KIDNEY, PANCREAS-AFTER-KIDNEY, AND PANCREAS-TRANSPLANT-ALONE

3. Have a realistic understanding of the range of clinical outcomes that may be encountered.
4. Plans for long-term adherence to a disciplined medical regimen are feasible and realistic.

C. Pancreas-transplantation-alone (PTA) is covered when performed at a TRICARE-certified pancreas transplantation center or TRICARE-certified pediatric consortium pancreas transplantation center, for patients who:

1. Are suffering from labile Type I Diabetes Mellitus and hypoglycemia unawareness; and
2. Have exhausted more conservative medical and surgical treatments for Type I Diabetes Mellitus.
3. Have a realistic understanding of the range of clinical outcomes that may be encountered.
4. Plans for long-term adherence to a disciplined medical regimen are feasible and realistic.

D. Services and supplies related to SPK, PAK, and PTA are covered for:

1. Evaluation of a potential candidate's suitability for SPK, PAK, and PTA whether or not the patient is ultimately accepted as a candidate for transplantation.
2. Pre- and post-transplantation inpatient hospital and outpatient services.
3. Surgical services and related pre- and postoperative services of the transplantation team.
4. The donor acquisition team, including the costs of transportation to the location of the donor organ and transportation of the team and the donated organ to the location of the transplantation center.
5. The maintenance of the viability of the donor organ after all existing legal requirements for excision of the donor organ have been met.
6. Donor costs.
7. Blood and blood products.
8. FDA approved immunosuppression drugs to include off-label uses when reliable evidence documents that the off-label use is safe, effective and in accordance with the national standards of practice in the medical community (proven). Mycophenolate Mofetil (Cellcept) and Tacrolimus (Prograf) for the prophylaxis of organ rejection in patients receiving SPK, PAD, and PTA are covered.

9. Complications of the transplantation procedure, including inpatient care, management of infection and rejection episodes.
10. Periodic evaluation and assessment of the successfully transplanted patient.
11. Hepatitis B and pneumococcal vaccines for patients undergoing transplantation.
12. DNA-HLA tissue typing in determining histocompatibility.
13. Transportation of the patient by air ambulance and the services of a certified life support attendant.

III. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A. For beneficiaries who fail to obtain preauthorization for SPK, PAK, and PTA benefits may be extended if the services or supplies otherwise would qualify for benefits but for the failure to obtain preauthorization. If preauthorization is not received, the appropriate preauthorizing authority is responsible for reviewing the claims to determine whether the beneficiary's condition meets the clinical criteria for the SPK transplantation benefit. Charges for transplant and transplant-related services provided to TRICARE Prime enrollees who failed to obtain PCM referral and HCF authorization will be reimbursed only under Point of Service rules.

B. Benefits for SPK or PAK transplantation will only be allowed for transplants performed at a Medicare-approved renal transplantation center. Benefits for PTA will only be allowed for transplants performed at a TRICARE-certified pancreas transplant center. Benefits are also allowed for transplant center certification requirements performed at a pediatric facility that is TRICARE-certified as a pancreas transplantation center on the basis that the center belongs to a pediatric consortium program whose combined experience and survival data meet the TRICARE criteria for certification. The contractor in whose jurisdiction the center is located is the certifying authority for TRICARE authorization as a pancreas transplantation center. Refer to [Chapter 11, Section 7.1](#) for organ transplant center certification requirements.

C. Effective for admissions on or after October 1, 1999 PAK, PTA, and SPK transplantations shall be reimbursed under the assigned DRG. Claims for admissions prior to October 1, 1999, shall be reimbursed based on billed charges. Pancreas after kidney (PAK) and pancreas transplant alone (PTA) will be paid under the appropriate DRG once these transplants become a TRICARE benefit.

D. Claims for transportation of the donor organ and transplantation team shall be adjudicated on the basis of billed charges, but not to exceed the transport service's published schedule of charges, and cost-shared on an inpatient basis. Scheduled or chartered transportation may be cost-shared.

E. Charges made by the donor hospital will be cost-shared on an inpatient basis and must be fully itemized and billed by the transplantation center in the name of the TRICARE patient.

TRICARE POLICY MANUAL 6010.54-M, AUGUST 1, 2002

CHAPTER 4, SECTION 24.7

SIMULTANEOUS PANCREAS-KIDNEY, PANCREAS-AFTER-KIDNEY, AND PANCREAS-TRANSPLANT-ALONE

F. Acquisition and donor costs are not considered to be components of the services covered under the DRG and will be reimbursed based on billed charges. These costs must be billed separately on a standard UB-92 claim form in the name of the TRICARE patient.

G. When a properly preauthorized candidate is discharged less than 24 hours after admission because of extenuating circumstances, such as the available organ is found not suitable or other circumstances which prohibit the transplant from being timely performed, all otherwise authorized services associated with the admission shall be cost-shared on an inpatient basis, since the expectation at admission was that the patient would remain more than 24 hours.

H. SPKs or PAKs performed on an emergency basis in an unauthorized renal transplant facility may be cost-shared only when the following conditions have been met:

1. The unauthorized center must consult with the nearest Medicare-certified renal transplant center regarding the transplantation case; and

2. It must be determined and documented by the transplant team physician(s) at the Medicare-approved renal transplantation center that transfer of the patient (to a Medicare-approved renal transplantation center) is not medically reasonable, even though transplantation is feasible and appropriate.

I. PTAs performed on an emergency basis in an unauthorized transplant facility may be cost-shared only when the following conditions have been met:

1. The unauthorized center must consult with the nearest TRICARE-certified transplant center regarding the transplantation case; and

2. It must be determined and documented by the transplant team physician(s) at the TRICARE-certified transplantation center that transfer of the patient (to a TRICARE-certified transplantation center) is not medically reasonable, even though transplantation is feasible and appropriate.

IV. EXCLUSIONS

A. Simultaneous kidney-pancreas transplant, pancreas-after-kidney transplant, and pancreas-transplantation-alone are excluded when any of the following contraindications exist:

1. Significant systemic or multisystemic disease (other than pancreatic-renal dysfunction) which limits the possibility of full recovery and may compromise the function of the newly transplanted organs.

2. Active alcohol or other substance abuse.

3. Malignancies metastasized to or extending beyond the margins of the kidney and/or pancreas.

4. Significant coronary artery disease.

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CHAPTER 4, SECTION 24.7

SIMULTANEOUS PANCREAS-KIDNEY, PANCREAS-AFTER-KIDNEY, AND PANCREAS-TRANSPLANT-ALONE

B. The following are also excluded:

1. Expenses waived by the transplantation center (e.g., beneficiary/sponsor not financially liable).
2. Services and supplies not provided in accordance with applicable program criteria (i.e., part of a grant or research program; unproven procedure).
3. Administration of an unproven immunosuppressant drug that is not FDA approved or has not received TRICARE approval as an appropriate "off-label" drug indication.
4. Pre- or post-transplantation nonmedical expenses (e.g., out-of-hospital living expenses, to include hotel, meals, privately owned vehicle for the beneficiary or family members).
5. Transportation of an organ donor.
6. Pancreatic islet transplantation (CPT² procedure code 48160).

V. EFFECTIVE DATES

- A. October 1, 1995, for SPK transplants.
- B. January 1, 1996, for PAK and PTA transplants.

- END -

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