

Clinical Policy: Cardiac Biomarker Testing

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[Coding Implications](#)

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Description

The release of cardiac biomarkers is among the cascade of events that occur during acute coronary syndromes and cardiac ischemia.¹ This policy discusses the medical necessity requirements for testing of these cardiac biomarkers.

Policy/Criteria

- I. It is the policy of health plans affiliated with Centene Corporation[®] that troponin I or T testing is **medically necessary** and the appropriate cardiac biomarker for evaluating for suspected acute myocardial infarctions (AMI) or myocardial injury due to other mechanisms.
- II. It is the policy of health plans affiliated with Centene Corporation that creatine kinase myocardial isoenzyme (CK-MB) and myoglobin testing are **not medically necessary** in the evaluation for suspected AMI because troponin is the recommended biomarker due to its superior sensitivity and accuracy.

Background

Detection of specific cardiac biomarkers in blood serum is a useful clinical indication of acute myocardial infarctions (AMI), myocarditis, or heart failure.² Cardiac troponins I and T have become the preferred biomarkers used for diagnoses of acute coronary syndromes due to their high specificity and sensitivity and because these subunits are expressed in the myocardium.¹⁻⁷ Furthermore, troponin levels are also elevated for acute and chronic decompensated heart failure in instances of myocyte injury and/or necrosis.⁷⁻⁸

Other cardiac peptides that were previously assessed for AMI include creatine kinase myocardial isoenzyme (CK-MB) and myoglobin.¹ However, recent evidence suggests that the sensitivity and specificity of these biomarkers are inferior compared to the troponins, suggesting that troponins are a more accurate biomarker of myocardial injury.^{1-2,7} According to the 2014 American College of Cardiologists/American Heart Association (ACC/AHA) clinical practice guidelines, CK-MB and myoglobin are no longer necessary for acute coronary syndrome diagnosis as a result of the advent of troponin assays.² CK-MB detection is comparatively less sensitive and less specific.¹⁻⁷ A 2010 retrospective cohort study was performed in an emergency department over a 12 month period examining patients who had troponin testing.⁹ The study included 11,092 visits where at least one troponin test was ordered, and 97.9% of these patients also had a CK-MB ordered.⁹ The authors concluded that CK-MB testing can be omitted during the initial screening of AMIs since the study showed a 0% rate of positive CK-MB index with negative troponin.⁹ Eggers et al. evaluated the role of myoglobin with troponin I to detect AMI in a sample of 197 patients and determined that neither myoglobin nor CK-MB added clinical diagnostic value.¹⁰ Of note, Singh et al. measured CK-MB testing from 2007 to 2013 and found a dramatic decrease from 12,057 tests in 2007 to 36 tests in 2013.¹¹

Coding Implications

This clinical policy references Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®). CPT® is a registered trademark of the American Medical Association. All CPT codes and descriptions are copyrighted 2022, American Medical Association. All rights reserved. CPT codes and CPT descriptions are from the current manuals and those included herein are not intended to be all-inclusive and are included for informational purposes only. Codes referenced in this clinical policy are for informational purposes only. Inclusion or exclusion of any codes does not guarantee coverage. Providers should reference the most up-to-date sources of professional coding guidance prior to the submission of claims for reimbursement of covered services.

Table 1: CPT codes not medically necessary when billed with CPT 84484 Troponin

CPT Codes	Description
82553	Creatine kinase (CK), (CPK); MB fraction only
83874	Myoglobin

Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals	Revision Date	Approval Date
Policy developed	12/17	12/17
Deleted Table 2, diagnosis code list. Clarified in criteria point II that CK-MB and myoglobin are not medically necessary <i>when billed with 84484 troponin</i> . Specialist reviewed	03/18	03/18
References reviewed and updated.	02/19	02/19
References reviewed and updated. Coding reviewed.	01/20	01/20
Added “or myocardial injury due to other mechanisms” in addition to acute myocardial infarction for approval in criteria I. References reviewed and updated. Coding reviewed. Replaced “member” with “member/enrollee” in all instances.	12/20	01/21
Annual review. Changed “review date” in the header to “date of last revision” and “date” in the revision log header to “revision date.” References reviewed and updated. Reviewed by specialist.	10/21	10/21
Annual review. Background updated with no impact on criteria. References reviewed and updated.	09/22	09/22
Annual review. Background updated with no impact on criteria. Coding reviewed. References reviewed and updated. Reviewed by external specialist.	09/23	

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- Dosage error in article text]. *Circulation*. 2014;130(25):e344 to e426. doi:10.1161/CIR.000000000000134
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Important Reminder

This clinical policy has been developed by appropriately experienced and licensed health care professionals based on a review and consideration of currently available generally accepted standards of medical practice; peer-reviewed medical literature; government agency/program approval status; evidence-based guidelines and positions of leading national health professional organizations; views of physicians practicing in relevant clinical areas affected by this clinical policy; and other available clinical information. The Health Plan makes no representations and accepts no liability with respect to the content of any external information used or relied upon in developing this clinical policy. This clinical policy is consistent with standards of medical practice current at the time that this clinical policy was approved. “Health Plan” means a health plan that has adopted this clinical policy and that is operated or administered, in whole or in part, by Centene Management Company, LLC, or any of such health plan’s affiliates, as applicable.

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limitations of the coverage documents (e.g., evidence of coverage, certificate of coverage, policy, contract of insurance, etc.), as well as to state and federal requirements and applicable Health Plan-level administrative policies and procedures.

This clinical policy is effective as of the date determined by the Health Plan. The date of posting may not be the effective date of this clinical policy. This clinical policy may be subject to applicable legal and regulatory requirements relating to provider notification. If there is a discrepancy between the effective date of this clinical policy and any applicable legal or regulatory requirement, the requirements of law and regulation shall govern. The Health Plan retains the right to change, amend or withdraw this clinical policy, and additional clinical policies may be developed and adopted as needed, at any time.

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Note: For Medicaid member/enrollees, when state Medicaid coverage provisions conflict with the coverage provisions in this clinical policy, state Medicaid coverage provisions take precedence. Please refer to the state Medicaid manual for any coverage provisions pertaining to this clinical policy.

Note: For Medicare member/enrollees, to ensure consistency with the Medicare National Coverage Determinations (NCD) and Local Coverage Determinations (LCD), all applicable NCDs, LCDs, and Medicare Coverage Articles should be reviewed prior to applying the criteria set forth in this clinical policy. Refer to the CMS website at <http://www.cms.gov> for additional information.

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