

Transmyocardial Revascularization for Severe Angina (#CAG-00004N)

Addendum to Decision Memorandum

October 1999

In response to questions from practicing physicians, the Coverage and Analysis Group is posting this addendum to make clear that, in cases where transmyocardial revascularization (TMR) is used as an adjunct to coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG), such use constitutes a covered use of TMR under the terms of our current manual instruction (CIM section 35-94). As outlined in that instruction, coverage is provided when TMR is used as a late or last resort for patients with severe angina caused by areas of the heart not amenable to surgical therapies, such as CABG.

In cases where patients are scheduled for a CABG but are found, often during the procedure, to have areas of viable myocardium that cannot be bypassed because of diffuse or distal disease Medicare will cover adjunctive TMR in those areas refractory to the scheduled therapy. The areas of the myocardium involved are not amenable to CABG, and the laser is being used in accordance with its FDA approval for use in treating severe angina. This is consistent with other Medicare coverages of multiple surgical procedures in those cases where they are medically reasonable and necessary for the patient being treated.