

GEORGE VOINOVICH
OHIO



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20510

March 10, 2008

Mr. Kerry Weems
Acting Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
200 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Administrator Weems:

I am writing to bring to your attention concerns about the Proposed Decision Memo on the National Coverage Decision (NCD) for Cardiac Computed Tomography Angiography (CCTA).

As you know, CCTA is a diagnostic non-invasive medical imaging tool used to detect Coronary Artery Disease (CAD) in patients showing multiple symptoms. According to the National Institutes of Health, CAD is the most common type of heart disease, as well as the number one killer for both men and women. CCTA often eliminates the need for an invasive and expensive procedure to diagnose CAD by quickly providing precise and comprehensive information on heart ailments without the need for surgery.

The proposed NCD states that the evidence is inadequate to conclude that CCTA is "reasonable and necessary" for the diagnosis of coronary artery disease (CAD). As a result, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) plans to disallow coverage of CCTA for the diagnosis of CAD, unless the patient is enrolled in a clinical study approved by CMS.

It is my understanding that CCTA has widespread acceptance as a proven technology to rule out heart disease with greater than 99 percent accuracy. Furthermore, this technology is used in over 2000 centers nationwide and has been approved by local Medicare carriers in all 50 states. In 2006, 50,000 patients and their physicians utilized CCTA. Yet, if the NCD is finalized, beginning March 13th, current and future Medicare beneficiaries will be without access to CCTA, and instead require more invasive and expensive tests for diagnosis.

I ask that you reconsider the effectiveness of CCTA and give all due consideration to the impact the NCD could have on the state of cardiac care in our country.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns.

Sincerely,


George V. Voinovich
United States Senator