
Oxford Health Requires Accreditation of Nuclear Cardiology Labs

In a May 2002 letter to its physician providers of healthcare, Oxford Health Plans announced that it will require accreditation of nuclear cardiology laboratories by the Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Nuclear Medicine Laboratories (ICANL) by February 2, 2004. The new mandate affects any laboratory that is currently a member of Oxford Health Plans in the states of Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, or Rhode Island.

The policy states that all Oxford nuclear cardiologists must also pass the Certification Board of Nuclear Cardiology (CBNC) examination by the February deadline. After this date, reimbursement claims will be honored only for laboratories that have achieved accreditation and where examinations are performed by CBNC-certified nuclear cardiologists. Claims from non-accredited laboratories will not be

approved, regardless of CBNC status.

The policy is not the first to link reimbursement to ICANL laboratory accreditation. In June 2000, United Healthcare of Wisconsin announced that it will require outpatient facilities providing nuclear cardiology services to achieve ICANL accreditation by July 1, 2003.

Sandra Katanick, Executive Director of the ICANL, commented, "I am pleased to see the positive response by Oxford Health Plans and the nuclear cardiology community to the accreditation process. The laboratory personnel that I have had the pleasure of speaking with regarding the process are committed to providing quality diagnostic testing and undergoing a stringent peer review of their work. Even though the process can be time-consuming, completion of the application and successful acquisition of ICANL accreditation almost always results in better patient care."

