



July 3, 2024

1289845

## **24-Hour Blood Pressure Monitoring by Facilities Providing Home Sleep Apnea Testing**

Dear Polysomnography Stakeholder:

Recently, it has come to the attention of the Medical Services Commission (the Commission) that the equipment for 24-hour blood pressure monitoring is being provided, on a patient-pay basis, by some facilities which are approved to bill the Medical Services Plan (MSP) for home sleep apnea testing (HSAT).

Although 24-hour blood pressure monitoring is not in itself an MSP benefit, the *Medicare Protection Act* (S17) (1) specifically prohibits charging a person both "for or in relation to" a benefit.

### **General limits on direct or extra billing**

**17** (1) Except as specified in this Act or the regulations or by the commission under this Act, a person must not charge another person

- (a) *for or in relation to a benefit, or*
- (b) for materials, consultations, procedures, use of an office, clinic or other place or for any other matters that relate to the rendering of a benefit.

[Emphasis Added]

The Commission considers that provision of 24-hour blood pressure monitoring by an approved HSAT facility is in fact related to a benefit in that the diagnostic HSAT has been requested by a referring physician and the identification of diagnosed hypertension is a component of the Provincial Standard Requisition for Home Sleep Apnea Test (for details see: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/forms/1944fil.pdf>).


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As such, the Commission considers that it is not appropriate for approved HSAT providers to bill a patient for this procedure.

The Commission acknowledges that LifeLabs does bill patients for this procedure, but as there is no relation to an MSP benefit (the HSAT) it is not the same situation as an HSAT firm charging a patient for this service.

If you have any questions regarding this announcement, please contact Diagnostic Facilities Administration ([DFAdmin@gov.bc.ca](mailto:DFAdmin@gov.bc.ca)).

Regards,



Dr. Robert Halpenny  
Chair

Medical Services Commission

pc: Stephanie Power, Chair, Advisory Committee on Diagnostic Facilities  
Bronwen Bossy, Director, Diagnostic Services, Ministry of Health  
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