



# ASE

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF  
ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY

*Sound Saves Lives*

## Advanced Imaging References and Additional Information

### **Echocardiography's Exclusion from Advanced Diagnostic Imaging Services**

Section 1834(e)(1)(B) of the Social Security Act defines "advanced diagnostic imaging services" as diagnostic magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT), and nuclear medicine imaging procedures. This definition explicitly excludes ultrasound-based technologies like echocardiography, despite echocardiography sharing many characteristics with officially recognized advanced imaging modalities.

### **Impact of Exclusion on Patient Care and Healthcare System**

- **Quality and Accreditation Concerns**
  - The exclusion of echocardiography from advanced imaging classification has created a divided system of quality assurance. Without mandatory accreditation requirements that apply to advanced imaging services, echocardiography labs do not have to follow quality standards. While voluntary accreditation exists through organizations like the Intersocietal Accreditation Commission (IAC), the lack of uniform standards has led to variability in technical quality and interpretation accuracy.
- **Workforce and Practice Standards**
  - The current classification system allows practitioners without specialized cardiac imaging training to perform echocardiograms, increasing the risk of misdiagnosis and unnecessary repeat testing. The lack of recognition as advanced imaging has also impeded the development of standardized reporting templates and consistent quality metrics in echocardiography practice.

By recognizing echocardiography as an advanced imaging service, Congress can ensure higher quality standards, proper oversight, and qualified specialists performing these critical diagnostic procedures, ultimately improving patient outcomes while potentially reducing healthcare costs through more appropriate utilization.

### **Draft Legislative Language**

ASE respectfully offers for consideration the following draft legislative language for adding echocardiography as an advanced imaging modality. The suggested draft language modifies the existing section of the Social Security Act:

#### *SECTION 1. CLARIFICATION OF ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENT FOR ADVANCED DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING.*

*Section 1834(e)(1)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m) is amended - -*

- (1) in clause (i), by inserting "echocardiography," before "and nuclear medicine"; and*
- (2) in clause (ii), by inserting "except echocardiography" after "ultrasound".*

As a result of the draft legislative language above, the revised Section 1834(e)(1)(B) of the Social Security Act would read as follows:

Social Security Act Section 1834 [42 U.S.C. 1395m]

(e)[143] ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENT FOR ADVANCED DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING SERVICES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Beginning with January 1, 2012, with respect to the technical component of advanced diagnostic imaging services for which payment is made under the fee schedule established under section 1848(b) and that are furnished by a supplier, payment may only be made if such supplier is accredited by an accreditation organization designated by the Secretary under paragraph (2)(B)(i).

(B) ADVANCED DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING SERVICES DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “advanced diagnostic imaging services” includes—

(i) diagnostic magnetic resonance imaging, computed tomography, *[insert: echocardiography,]* and nuclear medicine (including positron emission tomography); and

(ii) such other diagnostic imaging services, including services described in section 1848(b)(4)(B) (excluding X-ray, ultrasound *[insert: except echocardiography]*, and fluoroscopy), as specified by the Secretary in consultation with physician specialty organizations and other stakeholders.

(C) SUPPLIER DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “supplier” has the meaning given such term in section 1861(d).