



ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY AS ADVANCED IMAGING

WHAT IS ADVANCED IMAGING?

Advanced imaging refers to diagnostic imaging services that provide a detailed, high-resolution view of internal structures to aid in accurate diagnosis and treatment planning. **Despite providing high-resolution cardiac images with Doppler, Strain, and 3D capabilities, echocardiography is not listed as an advanced imaging modality.**

WHY IS ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY NOT CLASSIFIED AS ADVANCED IMAGING?

Section 1834(e)(1)(B) of the Social Security Act defines “advanced diagnostic imaging services” as MRI, CT, and nuclear medicine imaging, explicitly excluding ultrasound technologies like echocardiography.

IMPACT OF CURRENT CLASSIFICATION

- **Inconsistent Quality Standards:** Without the mandatory accreditation requirements that apply to advanced imaging services, echocardiography labs quality can be inconsistent, potentially compromising patient care.
- **Insufficient Regulatory Oversight:** Echocardiography facilities are not held to the same rigorous standards as other advanced imaging modalities, creating gaps in quality assurance mechanisms.
- **Practitioner Qualification Issues:** Non-specialists without cardiac imaging expertise can perform echocardiograms, increasing the risk of misdiagnosis and interpretation errors.
- **Increased Healthcare Costs:** Misdiagnoses and interpretation errors lead to unnecessary repeat testing and inappropriate treatment plans, adding avoidable spending.
- **Unaddressed Utilization Growth:** The rapid expansion of echocardiography services lacks proper utilization management controls that apply to advanced imaging modalities.



ASE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Amend Section 1834(e)(1)(B) to include echocardiography as an “advanced diagnostic imaging service”
- Recognizing echocardiography as an advanced imaging service will ensure higher quality standards, proper oversight, and qualified specialists performing these critical diagnostic procedures, ultimately improving patient outcomes while potentially reducing healthcare costs.



American Society of Echocardiography (ASE) is the Society for Cardiovascular Ultrasound Professionals™. It is the largest global organization for cardiovascular ultrasound imaging serving physicians, sonographers, nurses, veterinarians, and scientists and as such is the leader and advocate, setting practice standards and guidelines for the field.