Genetic Testing for Cancer Susceptibility and Hereditary Cancer Syndromes

Description

Genetic testing for cancer susceptibility and hereditary cancer syndromes is performed in people with known risk factors for an inherited form of cancer. Testing may be used in people diagnosed with cancer when there are “red flags” in the individual’s personal medical and/or family history for a hereditary form. Predictive genetic testing may also be performed for this group of conditions, in people known to be at increased risk of developing an inherited condition based on their family history. This testing is generally limited to adult individuals; however, it may be considered for minors if the results will be of medical and/or psychosocial benefit. A positive genetic test result increases the risk for cancer (types vary by the gene involved) and, therefore, impacts medical management decisions around screening, prevention, and treatment.

- Tests used to screen for or make a diagnosis of cancer are covered separately as Genetic Testing for the Screening, Diagnosis, and Monitoring of Cancer.
- This policy does not address diagnostic or predictive testing for conditions other than hereditary cancer. Refer to Genetic Testing to Diagnose Non-Cancer Conditions and Genetic Testing to Predict Disease Risk for those purposes.

Criteria

Introduction

Genetic testing for cancer susceptibility and hereditary cancer syndromes are reviewed using the following criteria.

Criteria: General Coverage Guidance

Individuals may be considered for genetic testing for hereditary cancer syndromes when ALL of the following conditions are met:

- **Technical and clinical validity**: The test must be accurate, sensitive and specific, based on sufficient, quality scientific evidence to support the claims of the test.
- **Clinical utility**: Healthcare providers can use the test results to provide significantly better medical care for the individual.
- **Reasonable use**: The usefulness of the test is not significantly offset by negative factors, such as expense, clinical risk, or social or ethical challenges.
Limits:

- Testing will be considered only for the number of genes or tests necessary to establish mutation status. A tiered approach to testing, with reflex to more detailed testing and/or different genes, will be required when clinically possible.
- Genetic testing is indicated once per lifetime per condition. Exceptions may be considered if technical advances in testing demonstrate significant advantages that would support a medical need to retest.
- Testing will be considered only for the known familial mutations when clinically possible.

Criteria: Test-specific Guidelines

Test-specific guidelines are available for some hereditary cancer syndrome tests. For tests without a specific guideline, use the General Coverage Guidance.

Benefit exclusion

Exclusions and Other Considerations

Testing unaffected individuals (e.g. carrier testing, predictive testing, presymptomatic testing, etc) is a BCBSAZ benefit exclusion and, therefore, not eligible for reimbursement.

References

Introduction

This guideline cites the following references.