DIGITAL SUBTRACTION ANGIOGRAPHY (DSA)  
RAD601.033

COVERAGE:

Digital Subtraction Angiography (DSA) is considered medically necessary.

DSA is not eligible for coverage as a separate evaluation as it is considered an integral part of a conventional angiography.

DESCRIPTION:

**Digital Subtraction Angiography (DSA)** is a procedure, using computer technology to enhance the image quality of x-rays. This involves subtracting the radiographic image obtained without a contrast agent from an image taken with a contrast agent. Subtraction allows for visualization of blood vessels without interference from surrounding structures. The procedure is usually performed several times at different viewing positions using approximately 40 milliliters of contrast media each time. DSA is useful in evaluating:

- carotid arteries,
- carotid bifurcation,
- coronary arteries,
- renal arteries, and
- limited studies of peripheral arteries.

RATIONALE:

The optimal quality of a conventional film-screen angiography compared to DSA has produced virtually equivalent results for both grade of stenosis/occlusion and vessel visualization. In some studies, however, DSA alone was unsatisfactory, but it had a useful complementary role in resolving problems and its use reduced to film and contrast medium costs. DSA techniques are now widely used in many cardiac catheterization laboratories as part of conventional angiography in order to enhance the films.

PRICING:

DSA is part of the conventional arterial angiography and therefore does not warrant separate, additional reimbursement.

DISCLAIMER:

State and federal law, as well as contract language, including definitions and specific inclusions/exclusions, takes precedence over Medical Policy and must be considered first in determining coverage. The member’s contract benefits in effect on the date that services are rendered must be used. Any benefits are subject to the payment of premiums for the date on which services are rendered. Medical technology is constantly evolving, and we reserve the right to review
and update Medical Policy periodically. HMO Blue Texas physicians who are contracted/affiliated with a capitated IPA/medical group must contact the IPA/medical group for information regarding HMO claims/reimbursement information and other general policies and procedures.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas, a Division of Health Care Service Corporation, a Mutual Legal Reserve Company*
Southwest Texas HMO, Inc.* d/b/a HMO Blue® Texas
* Independent Licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

Posted Jan. 7, 2003