New BRCA Genetic Counseling Requirement Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

In an effort to ensure UnitedHealthcare members receive the best information possible so they can make informed decisions about their health care, UnitedHealthcare will begin requiring genetic counseling from an independent genetics care provider before we will approve prior authorization requests for testing for BReast CAncer (BRCA) mutations for hereditary breast and ovarian cancer. This requirement, which will become effective Jan. 1, 2016, will only apply to UnitedHealthcare commercial members with medical necessity benefit plans.

A genetic counseling visit will help UnitedHealthcare members understand the advantages and limitations of BRCA mutation analysis. All care providers administering the BRCA laboratory test will be required to show evidence that the UnitedHealthcare genetic counseling requirement has been fulfilled to receive prior authorization for the test.

Please reference the following frequently asked questions to learn more. If you have additional questions or need more information, please email unitedoncology@uhc.com.

Q1. Who is an independent genetics provider and what will they provide?

A. Genetic counseling must be done by an independent genetics care provider. The independent genetic care provider cannot be employed by a genetic testing lab. In order to ensure an independent genetic counseling encounter for UnitedHealthcare membership, it is important for the counselor to attest as being non-affiliated with a genetic testing lab.

Genetic care providers employed or contracted with a laboratory who are part of an integrated health system that routinely delivers health care services beyond the laboratory testing itself are considered independent. Genetic testing for BRCA mutations requires documentation of medical necessity by one of the following who has evaluated the member and intends to engage in post-test follow-up counseling:

- Board-eligible or board-certified genetics counselor


Doc#: PCA18786_20150928
• Advanced genetics nurse
• Genetics clinical nurse
• Advanced practice nurse in genetics
• Board-eligible or board-certified clinical geneticist
• A board-certified care provider with experience in cancer genetics who has provided cancer risk assessment on a regular basis and received specialized, ongoing training in cancer genetics.

The health care provider must do all of the following:

• Fill out the UnitedHealthcare genetic counseling attestation form. The form will be available at UnitedHealthcareOnline.com > Clinician Resources > Oncology > Programs, Tools & Resources > BRCA Testing > Tools & Resources by Dec. 1, 2015. The form must be signed by a qualified genetic care provider.
• Provide a three-generation pedigree. This is a listing of all of the member’s family members and their cancer histories.

Q2. Why are we requiring this counseling?

A. We are requiring the genetic counseling to help our members receive the best information possible so they can make informed decisions about their health care. The United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends that care providers screen women who have family members with breast, ovarian, tubal, or peritoneal cancer with one of several screening tools designed to identify a family history that may be associated with an increased risk for potentially harmful mutations in breast cancer susceptibility genes (BRCA1 or BRCA2). Women with positive screening results should receive genetic counseling and, if indicated after counseling, BRCA testing. The National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) also states that cancer risk assessment and genetic counseling are highly recommended when genetic testing is offered, as well as after results are disclosed.

Q3. What is BRCA and why is it significant?

A. BRCA1 and BRCA2 are human genes that produce tumor suppressor proteins. These proteins repair damaged DNA and therefore play a role in ensuring the stability of the cell’s genetic material. When either of these genes is mutated or altered, DNA damage may not be repaired properly and this increases the risk of a cancer mutation. Specific inherited mutations of BRCA1 and BRCA2 increase the risk of female breast and ovarian cancers. They have also been associated with additional cancer types. These mutations are relatively rare in the general population, so testing should only be done on individuals with personal or family histories.
suggesting a mutation (source: National Cancer Institute, BRCA1 and BRCA2: Cancer Risk and Genetic Testing).

Q4. Who should have genetic counseling to determine if they need BRCA1 and BRCA2 genetic testing?

A. UnitedHealthcare members who have a personal and/or family history of breast, ovarian, tubal or peritoneal cancer should be screened with one of the available tools designed to identify a family history that may be associated with an increased risk for BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutations.

Q5. How do I find an independent genetics provider who is in-network?

A. You can use any of the following methods to find a genetics counselor:
   • Visit www.informedDNA.com or call InformedDNA at 800-975-4819 to access nationwide in-network telephone genetic counseling. InformedDNA is an independent group of genetics specialists enabled by a comprehensive evidence-based knowledge library for genetic tests and hereditary conditions.
   • Call UnitedHealthcare at the number on the back of the UnitedHealthcare member’s health care identification card.
   • Visit myuhc.com and search for genetic counselors.
   • Visit the National Society of Genetic Counselors at NSGC.org. Check the “Genetic Counselor Certified” box at the bottom of the page. This list may, however, include genetic counselors that are non-participating with UnitedHealthcare or employed by a lab.

Q6. What if there is no genetic counselor in my area?

A. If there are no qualified care providers in your area, we do allow genetic counseling by telephone. Please visit informedDNA.com or call InformedDNA at 800-975-4819 to access nationwide in-network telephone genetic counseling.