**Measure Description:**

The percentage of members 18 – 50 years of age who had a **diagnosis of Low Back Pain** and **Did Not have an Imaging Study** (plain X-ray, MRI, CT scan) within 28 days of the diagnosis.

**Members included in this measure are:**
- Members who had an Outpatient or ED visit with a primary diagnosis of Low Back Pain.
  - To be included, there must be a period of 6 months without claims or encounters for low back pain before the Outpatient or ED visit.

**Codes Identifying Low back Pain:**

**Codes to Identify Outpatient Visits:**
- HCPCS Codes: G0402, G0438, G0439

**Codes to Identify Observation Visits:**
- CPT: 99217 - 99220

**Best Practice:**

American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) does not recommend imaging for low back pain within the first six weeks, unless red flags are present.

**Why This Measure is Important:**
- Acute low back pain (LBP) with or without radiculopathy is one of the most common health problems in the US and is the leading cause of disability for persons younger than age 45.
- Low Back Pain (LBP) affects 2/3 of adults at some time in their lives.
- In 2010, more than 70 million CT scans (which can have 50- to 500-times the radiation dose of X-rays) were given in the U.S.—up from 3 million 30 years ago.
- 80% of radiation exposures occur among non-hospitalized patients.
- Exposure of greater than 20 mSv is considered high; undergoing a nuclear stress test and a CT angiography would result in more than 20 mSv of radiation exposure for a patient.

**Sources:**
- [http://www.aafp.org](http://www.aafp.org)
- [http://www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)


**Please Note:** the above codes are utilized by NCQA for HEDIS reporting. Reimbursement is subject to the provider agreement and member’s contract. If you have questions, please call the Provider Relations Department @ 1-800-451-4447 or 570-200-4700.

---

**Blue Cross of Northeastern Pennsylvania is committed to Quality Care for all of its members. This is accomplished through the use of Best Practice Clinical Guidelines.**