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## LAB ALERT

**Date:** February 13, 2020

### **Billing Brief: Coverage for Gastrointestinal Pathogen (GIP) Molecular Assay Identified by Multiplex Nucleic Acid Amplification (NAATs)**

Dear Regional Pathology Services Clients,

We have received several questions from clients regarding coverage of the GIP panel commonly ordered for patients with diarrhea. ([Test Code: GIP](#), [CPT code/PLA code 0097U](#)). This assay was ordered in lieu of a stool culture with results same day versus culture that can take up to 5 days.

There are many payors and we cannot know which ones will cover it and which will not. It is therefore best practice to always check with the payor to see if a prior authorization is needed and if it will be covered.

We have received communication from Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) about the GIP as follows:

- I. The use of nucleic acid testing using a direct or amplified probe technique with or without quantification of viral load for Gastrointestinal (GI) Pathogen Panel is considered scientifically validated when performed in the inpatient setting.
- II. GI Pathogen Panel done in all other settings including but not limited to, emergency department, office visits, and all other outpatient settings is considered **investigational**.

<https://medicalpolicy.nebraskablue.com/policy/282/1>

United Healthcare listed the GI Panel code as one that as of March 1, 2020 will require a prior authorization through the Beacon LBS system.

As for Medicare the GIP panel will be covered with the correct diagnosis code and if it meets medical necessity. Here is a link to the Local Coverage Determinations <https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/details/article-details.aspx?articleId=56637&ver=14&LCDId=37766&bc=AAAAAAAAAgAAA&>

We ask clients to always check with payors before ordering to avoid unnecessary charges to the patient.

**If you have any questions or issues with these changes please contact client services at 402-559-6420 and ask to speak with one of the client coordinators.**

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