

Washington University in St. Louis

Appropriate Use Criteria

The Washington University Appropriate Use Criteria (AUC) are evidence-based guidelines to assist medical decision making for patients with specific clinical conditions. The AUC are built on an evidence base that considers patient health outcomes, weighing the benefits and harms of alternative care options and are integrated into broader care management and continuous quality improvement (QI) programs. The guidelines are either developed locally by Washington University's experts or adapted from published guidelines to match the specific needs of our patients.

Since feedback and transparency are crucial components of continually improving the AUCs, all AUCs are reviewed annually. In addition, the review process recognizes that patients often develop expertise in key aspects of their care and many patients have become active partners in medical decision making. The review process therefore incorporates public comments into the ongoing evolution of AUCs.

BACKGROUND

Medical Decision Making and Decision Support Systems

- Medical decision making has become increasingly difficult given the vast number of possible choices for diagnosis and treatment. While physicians possess expertise in many aspects of medical care, their ability to choose the best test or treatment has limits. Those limits include patients with conditions that they rarely encounter as well as patients with common conditions but uncommon circumstances. Clinical decision support systems have been developed to facilitate decision making in such instances.
- Clinical Decision Support Systems have two components. First is a set of Appropriate Use Criteria (AUC) which summarize the best available knowledge regarding a medical condition and its potential diagnosis and treatment. The AUC are individual criteria that link a patient's specific clinical condition to an appropriate medical service. Second is a means of integrating the AUC into clinical workflow so that it facilitates delivery of evidence-based care. Since electronic systems are routinely used to order diagnostic tests and treatments, these systems are becoming a venue for providing decision support.

Shared Decision Making

- [Choosing Wisely](#)

Appropriate Use Criteria

- American College of Radiology (ACR) [Appropriateness Criteria](#)

Impact of Clinical Decision Support Systems

- Publications showing success of pilot projects
- Medicare Demonstration Project: [Executive Summary](#) and [complete report](#)

Federal Legislation

- Protecting Access to Medicare Act (2014) – [Section on appropriate use for advanced medical imaging](#)
- [Revised timeline for implementation](#)
- Program specifics as outlined by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services – [Section from Nov 2015 Federal Register](#)