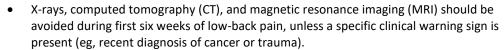
Tackling the Top-Five:

Imaging in First Six Week of Low-Back Pain



WHAT





 Low back pain is one of the most common causes of disability in the country—more than 80 percent of Americans will experience low back pain in their lifetime.

WHY

- Imaging within the first six weeks rarely if ever changes the course of treatment.
- Imaging often exposes patients radiation, which is a non-negligible and rarely-discussed risk.
- Imaging can detect clinically insignificant abnormalities ("incidentoliomas") that lead to extra imaging (and more radiation), more tests, and unnecessary procedures.
- Imaging can delay evidence-based treatment, such as physical therapy.
- Imaging the low back within the first 6 weeks of onset has a high "waste-index" (commonly used wastefully when used).

BURDEN

- In 2014, about 1.6 million avoidable imaging services provided and about \$500 million in wasted spending.
- The downstream and cascading costs of incidental findings are unknown.
- Additionally, overprescribing of opioids for low back pain contributes to the worsening of the opioid
 epidemic.

How to measure:

- <u>Specifications for claims-based analyses</u> to measure wasteful utilization and spending in-house, based on previous studies to measure Top Five.
- The Milliman MedInsight Health Waste Calculator

Choosing Wisely Clinical Evidence and Guidelines:

- North American Spine Society
- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Chiropractic Association
- American Academy of Physical Medicine

Neurological Surgeons

• And more

Reading list:

• Patient information from Choosing Wisely

Barriers to action and counterpoints:

- Patients believe that imaging will help physicians understand the problem and provide more effective treatment.
- Physician practice patterns are often sticky, and "exnovation" is complex and takes a long time, especially when the alternative is to either do nothing or more active treatments such as physical therapy.
- Imaging services generate revenue for providers.

Case studies, external resources, and model language:

- Integrated Healthcare Association
 - o General information on imaging for non-specific low back pain
 - Resources for payers and purchasers
- RFI language to discuss low-value care with your TPA or carrier.