



UPDATE: Ventricular Assist Device Implant Volume Requirement to Be Reinstated

During the public health emergency (PHE), the US Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) halted the requirement to count the volume of ventricular assist device (VAD) implants by surgeons. When the PHE ends on May 11, 2023, counting VAD implants by surgeons will resume in accordance with the National Coverage Determination (NCD) memo 20.9.1, which states that the VAD team must include the following:

“At least one physician with cardiothoracic surgery privileges and individual experience implanting at least 10 durable, intracorporeal, left ventricular assist devices over the course of the previous 36 months with activity in the last year.”

Therefore, counting VAD implants will resume on May 11, 2023. To meet eligibility requirements for VAD certification, programs must have at a minimum one privileged cardiothoracic surgeon who is actively working toward the minimum requirement of implanting no fewer than 10 VAD devices within the next 36 months as described in NCD 20.9.1.

During the 36 months between May 11, 2023, and May 11, 2026, each cardiothoracic surgeon who is granted privileges at a health care organization must implant a minimum of 10 VAD implants in that period with activity each year to meet eligibility requirements for VAD program certification. Moreover, any program that has continued to count and meet minimum surgical volumes during the PHE will be honored.

When applying for certification, each VAD program’s application will be evaluated to ensure that the program is on track to meet all eligibility requirements, including these minimum volume requirements, during the applicable period of time. The Joint Commission reviewer will reevaluate the eligibility requirements during the certification review.

For additional information or questions regarding this update, contact your account executive. 