

Market Segment

- Oncology

Medical Practice

- Georgia Cancer Specialists
Atlanta, GA

ICD-9-cm & CPT Codes

ICD-9-cm Codes

- 174.9 Breast Cancer
- 162.0 Lung Cancer
- 250.0 Diabetes Mellitus
- 263.0 Malnutrition
- 278.0 Obesity
- 783.1 Abnormal Weight Gain

CPT Codes

- 94690: Expired air analysis *

*Measurement can be billed separately or in conjunction with a patient office visit. Reimbursement cannot be guaranteed and is determined on an individual basis; most insurance carriers will cover the procedure if medical necessity is shown.

WatchWT System

- WatchWT MedGem (510k) indirect calorimeter
- MedGem Analyzer software
- Metabolism Matters trifold brochures.
- WatchWT Patient Education Materials.

** Public information obtained from the following websites: www.georgiamedicare.com & www.ghp.georgia.gov.

Overview of Program

Georgia Cancer Specialists (GCS) is the largest private oncology and hematology practice in the Southeast United States and a national leader in advanced cancer treatment and research. In addition to medical services, GCS also provides nutritional counseling, pain management, wellness counseling and home health coordination. With 30 offices with 39 physicians, 5 dietitians, and 5 wellness counselors throughout the state of Georgia, they are the first private oncology practice to offer full-time nutritional counseling as part of cancer treatment.

WatchWT Implementation at Georgia Cancer Specialists

GCS dietitians use the WatchWT MedGem® device to accurately determine resting metabolic rate (RMR) and provide patients with a precise energy plan to meet their individual needs. Measurements are recommended for two subsets of their population: for patients undergoing treatments (chemotherapy, radiation, etc.) that often have trouble maintaining or gaining weight, and for women who need to lose weight after undergoing breast cancer treatment.

Physicians often refer patients to the dietitians for RMR measurements, but the dietitian can also determine need for an RMR during a routine visit. The patient's history is obtained and needs are assessed during the initial 45-minute nutritional consultation. The dietitian then submits a claim to their private, in-house, pre-certification department for pre-approval from the patient's insurance company to complete the MedGem measurement. Following approval, the patient is seen for a second 45-minute follow-up visit. The RMR measurement is completed to provide an appropriate calorie budget based on their unique caloric needs. The dietitian educates the patient on basic nutritional information and emphasizes serving sizes in conjunction with their specific meal plan.

Bethany Smith, a dietitian at GCS, comments on the value of the MedGem brought to her counseling: "When calculating energy needs for patients in the past, I relied upon estimation equations that showed that two patients of the same sex, height, weight and age burned the same number of calories each day at rest. Using the MedGem to determine a patient's unique RMR allows me to provide a more individualized plan, resulting in better outcomes for my patients."

During both the state-wide and regional staff meetings, the dietitians educate GCS physicians on the importance of using the MedGem in practice. Additionally, MedGem brochures, posters and education materials on metabolism are displayed in each waiting room and dietitian office.

In the future, dietitians plan to include information about metabolism and the importance of an RMR measurement in the initial patient visit forms. Screening questions will also be used to help dietitians identify patients who would benefit from a measurement.

Patient & Financial Outcomes

GCS has been extremely successful implementing the use of MedGem in their practice to better manage patient care. Demonstrating the value of the measurements has resulted in a positive return on investment.

All MedGem measurements receive pre-approval from the patient's insurance company. GCS pre-certification department obtains verbal permission from the insurance company. The information required for pre-approval is: patient name, insurance company, physician referral name, dietitian name, CPT code and two to three diagnosis codes. All reimbursement claims are submitted using the CPT code 94690 - oxygen uptake. The first diagnosis code is the primary diagnosis (i.e. breast or lung cancer) and the second is the co-morbidity (i.e. obesity, malnutrition, etc.). If the insurance company does not pre-approve the procedure and the claim is denied, an appeal letter is submitted stating medical necessity and reasoning for the measurement. The maximum allowable charge accepted by Georgia Medicare and Georgia Health Partners, for CPT code, 94690 was \$83.23 and \$61.61**.

The MedGem indirect calorimeter has added effective nutritional technology to GCS abundant resources. It has enhanced the success of many patients who struggle with weight management problems, encouraging them to stick with their goals of attaining a healthy Lifestyle.