

Z-Code requirements for molecular diagnostic testing

DEX Diagnostics Exchange

Overview

Beginning on **Jan. 1, 2025**, you may start registering tests that are in scope for phase 4 of the DEX Z-Codes® for certain molecular diagnostic test services on facility and professional claims. This is part of our recently updated **Molecular Pathology Reimbursement Policy, Professional and Facility**, which went into effect June 1, 2024.

DEX is a web-based registry that Palmetto GBA administrators use to provide unique identifiers for molecular diagnostic tests. This identifier helps provide transparency of the service for claims adjudication.

Tests subject to **phase 4** will need to include the appropriate Z-Code on their claims, beginning with dates of service on or after March 1, 2025, to be considered for reimbursement. You can find more information at dexcodes.com.

Frequently asked questions

Where do I go to register my tests in the DEX registry?

You can register your tests at dexcodes.com.

How long does it take to receive a DEX Z-Code when registering a test with DEX?

Palmetto reviews laboratory information and test information within approximately 14 days of submission, resulting in a DEX Z-Code assignment.

What happens after I receive an initial DEX Z-Code assignment?

After the initial Z-Code assignment, Palmetto reviews the documentation. If no additional documentation is required, you'll receive a notification of an assigned CPT® code for the test. This process takes approximately 30 days from Z-Code assignment.

More complex tests may require additional documentation and could take up to 60 days from Z-Code assignment for the CPT code to be assigned. Once both the Z-Code and CPT code have been assigned, you should submit claims with the Z-Code and assigned CPT code.

For further guidance on the timeline for the registration of the tests, go to [DEX Diagnostics Exchange Test Registration](#).

Once registered as a user, how do I add my tests to the registry?

Select the “Add Test” action button from the “Catalog Overview” or “My Diagnostics Exchange” tabs within DEX. Complete all required fields and submit for review.

If we use a reference lab for a particular test, how do we register our DEX Z-Code identifier?

Both labs must register in DEX. The performing lab submits the test details to receive the Z-Code. If you send your labs to a reference lab, you must request “sharing” in DEX to obtain access to the Z-Code. The billing lab uses the Z-Code of the performing lab. The 2 labs link in DEX with a sharing request. Labs may only request Z-Codes for tests performed in-house.

How do I register a test that’s performed at 2 different locations in the DEX?

Only 1 lab should apply for the test if it is a standardized process performed in both locations. However, if there is a difference in the method, an application will be required from both locations.

Is the Palmetto DEX Z-Code the same as the Genetic Test Registry (GTR) ID from the National Institute of Health (NIH) GTR?

No. The GTR ID is created when labs register tests with the NIH GTR. As part of this policy update, you’re no longer required to submit the GTR ID on claims.

Do we need the DEX Z-Code identifier for reimbursement by UnitedHealthcare?

Yes. When reporting molecular diagnostic tests (MDT) you must submit a Palmetto DEX Z-Code identifier on the claim for the services to be considered for reimbursement. Using a Palmetto DEX Z-Code identifier on the claim should help reduce medical records requests and increase payment speed.

Where do I submit the DEX Z-Code identifier on the claim?

Submit the Palmetto DEX Z-Code preceding the decimal in field 2400 SV-101-7 for professional lab services submitted on the electronic claim form or in the shaded area of the service line in box 19 on a paper claim form. Facility lab services should fill out line SV-202-7 for electronic claims or block 80 for paper claims.

Do we need a DEX Z-Code for all genetic tests or only those with 81479?

Please visit [Palmetto GBA](#) or local coverage article: Billing and Coding: Palmetto Molecular Diagnostic Tests (MDT) (A56853), for a list of diagnostic services that fall within the scope of Palmetto testing.

Are labs reimbursed separately for multiple CPT codes for a single assay that may involve multiple tests that produce a single result?

One CPT code and its associated DEX Z-Code are reimbursable for a single assay that may involve multiple tests for a single result. We'll deny duplicate or multiple molecular pathology CPT codes reported with the same DEX Z-Code for the same patient on the same date of service.

Can the test be retired from the DEX Z-Code registry if the lab no longer performs the test?

Yes, in the event a test is retired, please update your DEX test submission with this change.

Questions?

We're here to help. Connect with us through chat 24/7 in the [UnitedHealthcare Provider Portal](#). For additional contact information, visit our [Contact us](#) page.

Smart Edits: Contact the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) Support Team at supportedi@uhc.com or call 800-842-1109.

Coding Corner: Contact the Provider Education Team at codechat@optum.com or education.info@optum.com.

Medical plan coverage offered by UnitedHealthcare of Arizona, Inc., Rocky Mountain Health Maintenance Organization Incorporated in Colorado, UnitedHealthcare of Florida, Inc., UnitedHealthcare of Georgia, Inc., UnitedHealthcare of Illinois, Inc., UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company in Alabama, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, and Tennessee, Optimum Choice, Inc. in Maryland and Virginia, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, Inc. in Michigan, UnitedHealthcare of Mississippi, Inc., UnitedHealthcare of North Carolina, Inc., UnitedHealthcare of Ohio, Inc., UnitedHealthcare of Oklahoma, Inc., UnitedHealthcare of Texas, Inc., and UnitedHealthcare of Oregon, Inc. in Washington. Administrative services provided by United HealthCare Services, Inc. or its affiliates.

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