



Advancing Transfusion and
Cellular Therapies Worldwide

CMS HCPCS Public Meeting

June 1, 2016

Agenda Item # 12 – Apheresis Platelets in Platelet Additive Solution

Statement of AABB

Presented by Theresa Wiegmann, JD, Director of Public Policy

AABB (formerly known as the American Association of Blood Banks) strongly supports the application for new HCPCS codes for apheresis platelets stored in platelet additive solution. AABB is a non-profit standard-setting and professional organization representing virtually every blood center in the United States as well as hospital-based blood banks and transfusion services and professionals involved in all aspects of blood collection, processing and transfusion medicine.

Platelet additive solution (PAS) may offer significant safety improvements over conventional platelet products. Apheresis platelets traditionally are co-administered with donor plasma. However, donor plasma is associated with adverse patient reactions, most notably allergic and febrile reactions. Allergic reactions occur in approximately 1 in 33 to 1 in 100 transfusions. In PAS platelets, 65 percent of the donor plasma is replaced with Food and Drug Administration approved platelet additive solution, thereby reducing the risks and costs associated with such adverse reactions.

AABB believes there is a clear national operating need for new HCPCS Level II P codes for PAS platelets, which are clearly distinguishable from other blood components. Because blood is a complex biologic, it is essential that physicians have access to a wide range of unique blood products to treat individual patients. Storing platelets in PAS is operationally and clinically different from other processing methods such as leukoreduction and irradiation and therefore necessitates a unique HCPCS code.

Without new codes to allow for appropriate billing of PAS platelets, patients may not have access to these new products. Because a significant percentage of platelets are transfused in the outpatient setting – where, for example, a large number of oncology patients are treated – obtaining appropriate HCPCS codes for these products is especially important. Without these new codes and the associated payment increases to reflect their added costs, hospitals may be unwilling to invest in this safety advancement. AABB appreciates the committee's and CMS' consideration of this coding request aimed at improving access to high-quality patient care.

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