

---

## Diagnostic Services – Radiology

DS-R-05.51

---

**SUBJECT/TITLE:** UIHC POLICY FOR EXTERNAL IMAGES

**PURPOSE:** To ensure that requests for radiology consultation services for external images provide:

- 1) Accurate and complete information to ensure patient safety and quality of care.
- 2) Adequate diagnostic information to ensure safe and effective use of diagnostic and therapeutic imaging services.
- 3) Sufficient information to document and monitor compliance with federal, state and third-party payer rules, regulations, and guidelines.

To create a process for storage of external images that:

- 1) Ensures the ability to access external images.
- 2) Allows access through an interface that is available throughout institution.
- 3) Allows temporary or permanent storage of external images.

**DEFINITION:** None

**BACKGROUND:**

In the past, the Department of Radiology has accepted all consultation requests for reinterpretation of imaging studies performed outside of UIHC. Requests for consultation for external studies have lacked pertinent information to make accurate interpretations; patient history and initial interpretations are generally not available. Outside studies are often of poor quality due to imaging techniques used at the point of image capture or because of the quality of the copies of these images. Lack of adequate information and poor quality images will affect the quality of the interpretation provided by the radiologist.

Often consultation requests are made to interpret all outside imaging studies performed, without determination of the relevance of those studies with the patient's current diagnosis and treatment plan. This results in unnecessary expenses that are charged to the patient and often results in an inability to obtain reimbursement for services provided.

External images that are brought to UIHC on CDs can be difficult to access due to:

- Incompatibility of the viewing software.
- CDs can be misplaced and lost.
- Availability of only a single copy of the images limits access in the institution.
- Comparison of external to internal developed images is cumbersome because it requires the use of two different interfaces.
- No clearly defined process to request permanent storage of external images.

### **POLICY:**

All requests for non-emergent radiology consultation services will be ordered through Epic order entry. All requests for permanent storage of external images will be placed through Epic order entry.

### **PROCEDURE FOR MANAGEMENT OF EXTERNAL IMAGES:**

1. External images, typically provided by the patient on CD, may be imported to a temporary server for viewing through EPIC under Outside Radiology Images. Instructions for importing images are available on EPIC HELP under EPIC Resources A-Z.
2. Once the images have been imported from the CD, the CD should be returned to the patient for their keeping.
3. Images placed on the temporary server are not permanently stored on that server. Storage capacity of the temporary server limits how long images remain on the temporary server. The server protocol automatically deletes images based upon the last time the images are viewed. An expectation is to hold images up to 60 days since last viewing; however, this target will vary as total storage space varies.
4. Requests for permanent storage or interpretation of external images may be made through the Epic order entry process.
5. With selection of storage only, the LIP requesting storage assumes responsibility for any interpretation of the content of the images. Radiology will not read nor provide interpretation and will not be responsible for the content of the images.
6. When an interpretation of an external image is ordered, those images related to that order will be stored within the permanent archive.
7. All requests must be completed accurately to assure that images imported are matched correctly with internal patient demographics. Double identifiers will be used to assure an accurate match.
8. If Radiology is not able to make a definitive match, the requestor will be contacted for further information. If a definitive match can not be confirmed, the images will not be stored within the internal archive and the requestor will be notified.

### **PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING CONSULTATION FOR EXTERNAL IMAGES:**

1. Complete the Epic order entry process requesting interpretation of external images.
2. If available, the original interpretations for external images should be sent to the Department of Radiology.

3. If a request is received to provide consultation on sequential studies for the same clinical indication, interpretations will be provided for the initial study and the last study.
4. If an external study was repeated at UIHC, interpretation of external images will performed at the discretion of the radiologist.
5. The radiologist will evaluate the submitted study and the request for consultation and may use their discretion to determine if interpretation of external images is appropriate.

Date created: June 21, 2007

Source: Department of Radiology

Date approved: June 21, 2007

Date effective: June 21, 2007

Date Revised: October 13, 2015

Date Reviewed: June 21, 2007; March 8, 2013, October 13, 2015