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**LETTER OF MEDICAL NECESSITY**

Nd:YAG Laser Ablation of Degenerative Vitreous Conditions

Dear Sir or Ma'am,

I am writing on behalf of your member who is **seeking pre-authorization payment or reimbursement** for laser treatment of degenerative vitreous bodies of their eyes.

I am not treating the small floaters that many people have and ignore. I turn down 30% of the patients that come for the treatment. Nearly all the people who come to me have **large, obstructive clouds of collagen that are in the center of their vision or swing into the center of their vision on eye movement and can not be ignored**. Nearly all have trouble reading, driving, using a computer, and difficulties with concentration.

A person with this condition has **three options**:

(1) **Do nothing**, that is, "Live with it";

(2) Have a **vitrectomy**. This is an invasive, far riskier, eye procedure done in a hospital or out-patient surgical facility in which three tubes are put into the eye, and all the vitreous of the eye is removed. About 70% of these patients get a cataract, and 1-3% get a retinal tear or retinal detachment. Or,

(3) have this **in-office laser procedure for floaters**. An ophthalmic YAG laser is used to vaporize (obliterate) the offending collagen masses. They disappear (not broken into smaller masses). This procedure takes two to four sessions per eye at the laser of about 25 minutes each over two days, individually placing 200 to 500 laser shots to vaporize the collagen masses. I performed the only **large, formal study** of this procedure. There were 200 patients in this study. The treatment was successful in 92% of the patients and there were zero complications. As of now, **only two other doctors** in the United States have the proper equipment and significant experience in this relatively unknown, new procedure.

For reference, here are the **codes** commonly used:

99204-57	Evaluation
H43.391 or H43.392	ICD-10 code for vitreous floaters and degenerative vitreous conditions
67299-58	Unlisted Procedure, Posterior Segment (Laser Ablation of Vitreous Degenerative Condition)

**Charges:** \$1,485 / eye.

There is **no present CPT code** that describes this procedure.

We have sought and received **coding** advice:

Dr. Karickhoff - 8/13/2010 7:45 PM

There is a consensus with our coding team that the best CPT code selection, that would easily withstand an audit, is the **unlisted procedure code 67299**.

Sue Vicchilli, COT, OCS

Academy Coding Executive

American Academy of Ophthalmic Executives (AAOE)

The American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO)

Sincerely,



John R. Karickhoff, M.D.

REFERENCES:

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Tsai, Treatment of Vitreous Floaters with Neodymium YAG Laser, *British Journal of Ophthalmology*, 77: 485-488, 1993

Tassignon, Indications for Q-switched and mode-locked Nd:YAG lasers in vitreoretinal pathology, *European Journal of Ophthalmology*, Vol. 1/no. 3: 123-130, 1991

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