



## **RE: Ultrasound Referrals and Exam Scheduling**

Dr Colleague,

I am writing you to let you know about challenges that have arisen in the scheduling of Ultrasound examinations at our clinics in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. We were in near complete lockdown for 3 months during which time we performed only urgent examinations and accumulated a large number of requisitions for exams of a less urgent nature. We are now going through the process of providing services to new patients while working down the large backlog that has built up over the lockdown.

In order to provide imaging services to our patients in an appropriate timeframe, we plan to:

- Prioritize urgent exams that will impact patient management, so that they are done in a timely fashion such as Carotid Doppler and Venous Ultrasound.
- Prioritize time sensitive examinations such as Obstetric Ultrasound.
- Reject certain requests if they are deemed unnecessary according to the Ministry of Health Appropriateness Working Group or Choosing Wisely recommendations.
- Refer patients to a hospital if their imaging needs require a more specialized service that would be unavailable in the outpatient setting.

**Muskuloskeletal** Ultrasound exams in particular will be a focus of scrutiny. Hip and knee ultrasound will not be performed for patients with known osteoarthritis as they are more appropriately evaluated at the Hospital Led Rapid Assessment Clinic. Ultrasound for soft tissue masses will be delayed unless they are enlarging or become painful. Tendon injuries and contractures of the fingers will be referred to a hospital where they can receive the specialized assessment that they require.

We welcome and indeed, rely on your feedback in order to work our way through the situation in the most efficient manner possible. If you feel that your patient's exam has been scheduled in an inappropriate timeframe or has been rejected in error, please feel free to call our Customer Care Centre at 905-635.7700.

Respectfully,

Dr. Brian Birchenough, CEO

September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020