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# Program Memorandum Intermediaries/Carriers

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Department of Health &  
Human Services (DHHS)  
Centers for Medicare &  
Medicaid Services (CMS)  
Date: JUNE 20, 2003

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Transmittal AB-03-090

## CHANGE REQUEST 2739

**SUBJECT: Coverage of Compression Garments in the Treatment of Venous Stasis Ulcers**

### Scope

This Program Memorandum (PM) provides instructions regarding the coverage of compression garments when treating venous stasis ulcers.

### Background

The accepted standard of care for the treatment of venous stasis ulcers includes the use of sustained limb compression. In the past, gradient compression stockings have not been covered for this purpose. Effective for items furnished on or after October 1, 2003, gradient compression stockings that serve a therapeutic or protective function and that are needed to secure a primary dressing may be covered as surgical dressings when the requirements in the implementation section of this PM have been met.

### Implementation

Effective for items furnished on or after October 1, 2003, gradient compression stockings falling under the following codes may be covered when the beneficiary has an open venous stasis ulcer that has been treated by a physician or other healthcare professional requiring medically necessary debridement, and when the gradient stocking can be proven to deliver compression greater than 30 mm Hg. and less than 50 mm Hg.

#### Applicable Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) Codes:

**L8110** - GRADIENT COMPRESSION STOCKING, BELOW KNEE, 30-40 MMHG, EACH

**L8120** - GRADIENT COMPRESSION STOCKING, BELOW KNEE, 40-50MMHG, EACH

#### Corresponding Common Working File (CWF) Payment Category Changes:

Edit Cat = 3, 21, 60, 62

TOS = P, S

#### Applicable Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) Modifier:

**AW** - ITEM FURNISHED IN CONJUNCTION WITH A SURGICAL DRESSING should follow each of the above codes.

**Codes L8110, L8120, with modifier AW** should be used for gradient compression stockings only when all of the requirements specified in this PM have been met.

**Education**

Contractors must notify suppliers of these changes in their next regularly scheduled bulletin, and post this information on their Web sites within 4 weeks of receiving this instruction. In addition, if you have a listserv that targets the affected provider communities, you must use it to notify subscribers that important information about "Coverage of Compression Garments" is available on your Web site.

*This PM is effective for claims with dates of service on or after October 1, 2003*

*The implementation date for this PM is October 1, 2003.*

**Any questions regarding these instructions should be directed to Michael Keane on (410) 786-4495.**

**These instructions should be implemented within your current operating budget.**

**This PM may be discarded October 1, 2004.**