I. Policy:
Many patients now have imaging performed at other institutions and then seek medical care at UMMMC. Even when a report is sent with the patient’s images, providers frequently consult with radiologists for a second opinion. The handling of these outside studies introduces several concerns regarding resource utilization, medico-legal risk, image archival costs, and technical quality control. This policy is necessary to ensure the quality treatment and safety of our patients, with the overall goal to avoid:

- Unnecessary repeat imaging
- Undocumented interpretations (i.e., “curbside” reads)
- Images in PACS with no associated report
- Images in PACS with no associated patient
- Images in PACS with no relevance to the treatment of a Medical Center patient

UMass Memorial Medical Center has invested in lifeIMAGE®, a software tool designed to streamline and standardize the viewing, uploading and sharing of outside studies. lifeIMAGE is intended to work in conjunction with this policy/procedure as defined below.

It is the policy of UMass Memorial Medical Center to not allow outside studies to exist in the Medical Center PACS except for the following reasons:

1. The patient has a future scheduled appointment at a Medical Center facility for an episode of care that is relevant to the outside study. The patient must already have a valid Medical Center MRN.

2. The outside study is being used for comparison to imaging previously acquired at the Medical Center. The patient must already have a valid Medical Center MRN.

3. A formal, secondary read of the outside study is requested via a written physician order.
Except for comparison purposes, no outside study will be allowed into PACS without an associated report. The requesting provider must submit a written physician order for a formal, secondary read to allow the outside study into PACS.

II. Definitions:
Comparison Study: An outside study that is to be merged with a patient’s Medical Center PACS record for comparison to imaging acquired at the Medical Center.

Gatekeeper: A person with the authority to schedule and import outside studies into PACS.

Medical Imaging: The technique and process used to create images of the human body for clinical diagnostic purposes.

Modality: In medical imaging, any of the various types of equipment used to acquire images of the body, such as radiography, ultrasound and magnetic resonance imaging.

Outside Study: A diagnostic image or series of images acquired via medical imaging technology from an institution other than the Medical Center, UMMC or CMMIC and not previously interpreted (with an available written report) by a UMMMG Radiologist.

PACS: Picture Archiving and Communication System; a system used in medical imaging to store, retrieve, distribute, analyze, and digitally process medical images.

RIS: Radiology Information System; a computerized database used to store, manipulate, and distribute patient radiological data and medical imaging.

Secondary Read: A formal, documented interpretation by a UMMMG Radiologist of an existing diagnostic study that has already been interpreted by another radiologist.

Upload Delegate: Typically, a front office or clinic staff member who receives outside studies from patients on CD/DVD at the time of the appointment.

III. General Procedure:
General Guidelines:
- All outside studies may be uploaded to lifeIMAGE for viewing and sharing. The images will remain in lifeIMAGE for 90 days.
- Any outside study uploaded to lifeIMAGE may be nominated to PACS if it meets one or more of the criterion defined in the Policy Statement.
- Per the discretion of the Medical Center Radiology Department, any nominated study may be allowed into PACS under the following conditions:
  1. As non-billable, for comparison to imaging acquired at the Medical Center
  2. As non-billable, if the outside study has an associated report

* * If the links in this policy do not work, notify PolicyAdministrator@umassmemorial.org. * *

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3. As billable (professional fee), if no associated report (requires secondary read)
4. As billable (professional fee), if a secondary read is requested

**Outside Study for Comparison to Medical Center Procedure:**
The upload delegate uploads any or all studies on the patient’s CD/DVD into lifeIMAGE. The referring clinician views the studies in lifeIMAGE and determines which are relevant for comparison to the Medical Center procedure. The referring clinician nominates those studies and chooses “Comparison Read” as the reason for nomination. The gatekeeper schedules a non-billable exam in the RIS, matches the nominated study to the exam based on accession number, and completes the import to PACS.

**Outside Study with Associated Report:**
The upload delegate uploads any or all studies on the patient’s CD/DVD into lifeIMAGE. The referring clinician views the studies in lifeIMAGE and determines which are relevant for archiving into PACS. The referring clinician nominates those studies and chooses the appropriate reason for nomination. The gatekeeper confirms that an associated report exists, schedules a non-billable exam in the RIS, matches the nominated study with associated report to the exam based on accession number, and completes the import to PACS.

**Outside Study with NO Associated Report:**
The upload delegate uploads any or all studies on the patient’s CD/DVD into lifeIMAGE. The referring clinician views the studies in lifeIMAGE and determines which are relevant for archiving into PACS. The referring clinician nominates those studies and chooses the appropriate reason for nomination. The referring clinician must enter clinical indication(s) and select the checkbox to authorize a second read before completing the nomination (see example below). The gatekeeper requests a Medical Center MRN, if applicable, enters a billable order in the RIS, matches the nominated study to the order based on accession number, and completes the push to PACS. The order then appears on the appropriate work list and the report is completed by the radiologist.

**Outside Study Secondary Read Request:**
The upload delegate uploads any or all studies on the patient’s CD/DVD into lifeIMAGE. The referring clinician views the studies in lifeIMAGE and determines which require a second read. The referring clinician nominates those studies and chooses “Secondary Read Request” as the reason for nomination. The referring clinician must enter clinical indication(s) and select the checkbox to authorize a second read before completing the nomination (see example below). The gatekeeper requests a Medical Center MRN, if applicable, enters a billable order in the RIS, matches the nominated study to the order based on accession number, and completes the push to PACS. The order then appears on the appropriate work list and the report is completed by the radiologist.

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IV. Clinical/Departmental Procedure:
   Algorithm

V. Supplemental Materials:
   Example Nomination Form

VI. References: N/A