

**PHILHEALTH CIRCULAR**  
No. 2023 - 0020

**TO : ALL PHILHEALTH MEMBERS, ACCREDITED HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS (HCPs), PHILHEALTH REGIONAL OFFICES (PROs), AND ALL OTHERS CONCERNED**

**SUBJECT : Increase of Monthly Limits on Cataract Claim Reimbursements Per PhilHealth-Accredited Health Care Professional**

**I. RATIONALE**

Blindness and visual impairment are still growing public health concerns in the country, with a prevalence rate of 1.98%<sup>1</sup>. In one local study in 2018, cataract was one of the major causes of visual impairment in the Philippines<sup>2</sup>.

In the signing of Universal Health Care (UHC) into law, the Corporation plays a crucial role in its implementation ensuring all Filipinos are covered and health services are accessible, affordable, and of quality without causing impoverishment to patients.

In light of the UHC law, existing policy that limits the number of cataract claims has to be reviewed. Hence, a joint consultation was made with relevant stakeholders such as the Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology (PAO) and Philippine Medical Association (PMA) on the cataract limits in particular. As a result, cataract limits was recognized as one of the safeguard measures of the Corporation in protecting the National Health Insurance Program (NHIP) against unethical practices of certain health care providers for purposes of gaining insurance claims. However, existing cataract limits have to be increased in coverage to provide financial protection to more Filipinos as there are communities with limited access to eye care specialists.

In recognition thereof, the PhilHealth Executive Committee (ExeCom) upheld that limiting cataract claims to a threshold is viable strategy to ensuring quality of care, appropriate utilization of services, prevention of unethical practices, and fund viability.

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<sup>1</sup> Barriers to eye care for older people in the Philippines, The Lancet (open access), March 2022  
<sup>2</sup> Philippine Eye Disease Study, 2018

## II. OBJECTIVES

This PhilHealth Circular aims to increase the currently prescribed limits of cataract claim reimbursement per doctor that would ensure financial risk protection to more Filipinos needing the said services but still maintaining existing measures for the promotion of quality care and patient safety as well as protection against unethical practices.

## III. SCOPE

This policy shall cover the prescribed limits on cataract reimbursement of PhilHealth-accredited health care professionals performing cataract surgeries.

## IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- A. Cataract<sup>3</sup>** - any opacity of the lens that may or may not be associated with visual problems and manifest as an obstruction of the red orange reflex on funduscopy.
- B. Cataract surgery<sup>4</sup>** - the removal of lens with cataract with or without replacement of an intraocular lens (IOL). The objectives of cataract management are the following: a) to correct visual impairment, b) maintenance of quality of life, and c) prevention of progression.

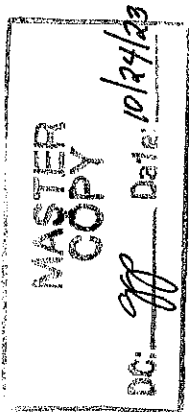
## V. POLICY STATEMENTS

- A. For cataract surgeries covered by the Cataract Pre-Surgery Authorization (CPSA), PhilHealth shall authorize up to a maximum of 200 approved CPSA requests per month not exceeding ten (10) scheduled surgeries per day per PhilHealth-accredited eye surgeon.
- B. The limit shall cover the following relative value scale (RVS) codes:

RVS Code	Description
66982	Extracapsular cataract removal with insertion of intraocular lens prosthesis (one stage procedure), manual or mechanical technique (e.g. irrigation and aspiration or phacoemulsification), complex, requiring devices or techniques not generally used in routine cataract surgery (e.g. iris expansion device, suture support for intraocular lens, or primary posterior capsulorhexis) or performed on patients in the amblyogenic developmental stage

<sup>3</sup> PhilHealth Circular No. 018-2015 Guidelines On the Diagnosis and Management of Uncomplicated Cataract In Adults

<sup>4</sup> Cataract in the Adult Eye Preferred Practice Pattern, AAO, 2016



RVS Code	Description
66983	Intracapsular cataract extraction with insertion of intraocular lens prosthesis (one stage procedure)
66984	Extracapsular cataract removal with insertion of intraocular lens prosthesis (one stage procedure), (e.g. irrigation and aspiration)
66987	Extracapsular cataract removal with insertion of intraocular lens prosthesis (one stage procedure), (e.g. phacoemulsification)

Table 1: Relative Value Scale Codes

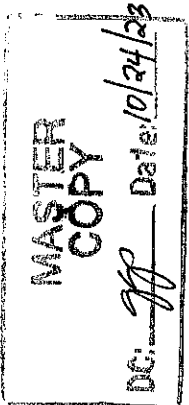
- C. The exemptions to the limit stated in PhilHealth Circular nos. 018-2015 (Guidelines On the Diagnosis and Management of Uncomplicated Cataract in Adults) and 2016-014 [Annex 2-List of Procedure Case Rates (Revision 3.0) And Supplementary Guidelines for All Case Rates] shall still be applicable.
- D. In ensuring quality of care and safety of PhilHealth members, it is reiterated that post-operative care as stated in PhilHealth Circular no. 018-2015 shall be performed by the attending eye surgeon or properly coordinated with another ophthalmologist that shall conduct post-operative care. The Corporation shall monitor adherence to this service and non-provision thereof shall be considered non-adherence to the said circular and administrative sanctions shall be applied to the concerned health care professional.
- E. The increase in cataract limits per health professional may be subjected to review as necessary and appropriate action shall be taken based on monitoring findings.

## VI. PENALTY CLAUSE

Any violation of this PhilHealth Circular shall be dealt with and penalized in accordance to pertinent provisions of Republic Act No. 7875, amended by RA Nos. 9241, and 10606, RA 11223 (UHC Act), and in the PhilHealth Rules on Administrative Cases (PROAC) involving health care providers, members, and PhilHealth employees.

## VII. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE

In the event that any part or provision of this PhilHealth Circular is declared invalid or unconstitutional, any part or provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.



**VIII. REPEALING CLAUSE**

This policy amends the provision pertaining to the limits on cataract surgery claims reimbursement as specified in PhilHealth Circular No. 2015-0018 (Guidelines on the Diagnosis and Management of Uncomplicated Cataract in Adults).

All provisions of previous PhilHealth Circulars and/or directives that are inconsistent with this policy specifically on cataract limits are hereby amended, modified or repealed accordingly.

**IX. DATE OF EFFECTIVITY**

This PhilHealth Circular shall take effect fifteen days after publication in the Official Gazette or in any newspaper of general circulation. A copy shall thereafter be deposited to the Office of the National Administrative Register (ONAR) at the University of the Philippines Law Center.

  
**EMMANUEL R. LEDESMA, JR.**  
President and Chief Executive Officer

Date signed: 10-17-23

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DC: ff Date: 10/24/23

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