



2009

DORSAL COLUMN STIMULATORS (PERMANENT) (MEDICARE)

Please note that a dorsal column stimulator is considered by Medicare to be a piece of durable medical equipment (DME) and the patient will be responsible for 20% of the cost of the item.

Medicare considers dorsal column stimulators (DCS) medically necessary durable medical equipment (DME) for the late or **last resort** management of members with chronic intractable pain due to failed back surgery syndrome with severe low back pain with a significant radicular component *or* complex regional pain syndrome (such as reflex sympathetic dystrophy), **AND** the member meets all of the following criteria:

- There is documented pathology, i.e., an objective basis for the pain complaint; **AND**
- Other more conservative modalities (pharmacological, surgical, physical, psychological) of pain management have been tried and failed; **AND**
- Member does not have any untreated existing drug addiction problems (per American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) guidelines); **AND**
- Member has undergone careful screening, evaluation and diagnosis by a multidisciplinary team prior to implantation. Such screening must include psychological as well as physical evaluation; **AND**
- Member has predominantly radiating extremity pain; **AND**
- Member experienced significant pain reduction (50% or more) with a 3- to 7-day trial of percutaneous spinal stimulation. (A trial of percutaneous spinal stimulation is considered medically necessary for members who meet the above-listed criteria, in order to predict whether a dorsal column stimulator will induce significant pain relief.)