

CHAPTER 3
SECTION 5.4

EXTRACORPOREAL MEMBRANE OXYGENATION (ECMO)

Issue Date: October 6, 1988

Authority: [32 CFR 199.4\(b\)\(2\)](#) and [\(c\)\(2\)](#)

I. PROCEDURE CODE

33960, 33961, 36822

II. DESCRIPTION

Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) is a procedure which entails the use of a modified heart-lung machine to support gas exchange for prolonged periods in patients with severe respiratory failure who are unresponsive to conventional methods of therapy.

III. POLICY

The use of ECMO for moribund patients with intractable respiratory failure is covered.

IV. EFFECTIVE DATE May 1, 1987.

V. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

All claims should contain sufficient medical documentation which establishes that the patient is moribund and unresponsive to conventional methods of therapy.

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