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# THE CASE FOR INVESTING IN CARDIAC PET IMAGING, EVEN DURING A PANDEMIC

A conversation with **KIM MCDANIEL**, Senior Director of Nuclear Medicine Sales and Market Support at Bracco Diagnostics



Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. Cardiac PET is a non-invasive imaging procedure known for efficiently and accurately diagnosing heart disease. Kim McDaniel outlines the benefits of investing in cardiac PET and how Bracco is helping to improve access to this important test.

### What is the value of cardiac PET during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Decisively diagnosing coronary artery disease (CAD) remains as valuable today as it was before the global pandemic. We know there are patients who are putting off important imaging studies like cardiac PET due to concerns about virus transmission, so some may not be getting the urgent treatment they need. The benefits of the diagnostic information provided by cardiac PET, especially for patients who are experiencing symptoms, far outweigh the risk of contracting COVID-19 in a physician's office or hospital.

Cardiac PET imaging has always been an efficient test, and this makes it especially valuable during the pandemic. A cardiac PET study only takes 30 to 45 minutes to complete, minimizing the time a patient spends in a facility and reducing the risk of exposure to the virus. The high diagnostic accuracy of cardiac PET means patients can often avoid multiple tests and visits to their healthcare provider. Communicating these attributes to patients can encourage them to keep appointments and get the help they need for life-threatening heart disease.

### How has COVID-19 affected sites that want to start cardiac PET programs?

In general, many physician practices, hospitals, and imaging sites are struggling financially because of the pandemic. Some hospitals became temporary COVID-specific facilities, and patients who are worried about the risk of infection avoided seeing their physicians or going to hospitals. As a result, physician practices and hospitals saw reduced revenue. There are additional costs associated with operating during COVID-19, such as more stringent cleaning and sanitizing routines and providing protective equipment for patients and staff. Decreased revenue and increased costs have forced some sites to freeze capital budgets for new investments until they have a better idea of how the pandemic is going to affect their practices long-term. For some practices, plans for starting cardiac PET programs have been put on hold.

### How does Bracco make cardiac PET more accessible, even in challenging times?

There are several variables to consider when starting a cardiac PET imaging program including patient volumes and startup costs. We work directly with each site to find the right solution for them.

We have several options including the traditional full-time program where the procedure is offered every day — ideal for practices that have enough patient volume, physician support, and infrastructure in place to support a full cardiac PET program. For sites that are concerned about the upfront investment to start a program, we work with companies that provide turnkey services. They can make getting started easy and minimize upfront costs because they install the scanner on a lease and, in some cases, even provide the staff. Finally, we also offer a daily mobile isotope service for sites that have lower patient volume. This option allows sites to provide cardiac PET procedures to their patients one or two days a week, which lowers the cost. For those who want to offer cardiac PET imaging to their patients but previously thought they couldn't, it may be time to take another look

### What business resources do Bracco provide to its cardiac PET customers?

Sites that make the significant investment in starting a cardiac PET imaging program need to know they can support it. We provide financial tools and a detailed break-even analysis to determine how many patients are needed for an investment in

cardiac PET to be worthwhile. We can also determine how quickly a practice can recover their initial investment. Once a site is up and running, we revisit these tools regularly to ensure the program is operating up to expectations and make modifications along the way.

Reimbursement is crucial for the success of a cardiac PET imaging program, so we spend a lot of time with our customers ensuring they know how to get paid for the tests they perform. We train our customers on how to code properly, set up the charge master, and document the test. We also help work with their local payers to set up or edit contracts so they can get reimbursed for the procedure. This ongoing work is labor and time-consuming, but we know it is essential for continued patient access to cardiac PET.

When necessary, we even get involved at the national level with advocacy and health policy. We continue to work with industry associations, Congress and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to make sure this important imaging modality remains viable and accessible in the future.



## Your Success is our Success



The individuals who appear are for illustrative purposes only. All persons depicted are models and not real patients or healthcare professionals.

## We are Cardiac PET™

### Since 1989, Bracco has been committed to cardiac PET and patient care through our unparalleled support.

- An extensive team of **accessible, locally-based** experts stand ready to support you and your staff.
- Exclusive, **customized business case tools** help ensure you meet your financial goals.
- Drive clinical and operational excellence in your organization with Bracco's **peer-to-peer support** program.
- Ongoing, **complimentary clinical training** at your facility keeps your staff at its best.
- Bracco supports the business side of your practice with **personalized reimbursement training** and updates.

### Tap into the expertise that more than 30 years in nuclear cardiology brings.

Learn more at [wearecardiacpet.com](http://wearecardiacpet.com) or talk with your Bracco representative at **1-877-BRACCO-9 (1-877-272-2269)**

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