

A Comprehensive Diagnostic Patient Profile— The Wave of the Future!

Good coding and documentation clearly depicts the level of disease severity, co-morbidities, underlying disease and other factors that contribute to the level of complexity for the patient encounter. Per the ICD-9-CM Official Guidelines and Reporting:

Code all documented conditions that coexist at the time of the encounter/visit, and require or affect patient care treatment or management.

CMS's payment is based on the overall health status of the member. Diagnosis codes are some of the criteria used for determining severity of illness, risk and resource utilization. Diagnostic coding influences the "level of risk" in determining CPT® coding assignment.

Moderate risk is equivalent to:

- a) One or more chronic illnesses with mild exacerbation, progression, or side effects of treatment, or
- b) Two or more chronic stable illnesses

High risk relates to:

- a) One or more chronic illnesses with severe exacerbation, progression or side effects of treatment, or
- b) Acute or chronic illnesses or injuries that pose a threat to life or body function

Status Codes do indicate and contribute to the complexity level of the encounter. Consider these V codes:

Renal Dialysis Status	V45.11
Tracheostomy Status	V44.0
Respirator Dependence	V46.11
Lower Limb Amputee	V49.7X
Artificial Openings for Feeding or Elimination	V44.X and V44.XX
Major Organ Transplant	V42.X and V42.XX
Asymptomatic HIV Status	V08

The presence of one or more of these conditions would be taken into account by the physician in the decision making process and could affect patient care, treatment and management. Other diagnosis codes that are not often reported, although the patient is being treated for the conditions, are:

Protein Calorie Malnutrition	263.X
Major Depression	296.2X and 296.3X
Alcohol Dependence & Drug Dependence	303.XX and 304.XX
History of Heart Attack	412

Good documentation is reflective of the "thought process" of the physician in treating patients. All conditions affecting the patient should be documented and coded.