

## **Dermatology Coding Alert**

### **Reader Question: Recover Skin Graft Pay With Thorough Details**

**Question:** Our practice has had a lot of denials on our skin graft procedures. Can you provide any hints on how to avoid further denials?

Florida Subscriber

**Answer:** For many denials, don't be quick to point the finger at yourself, because it may not be your fault; rather, your insurance carriers' edit process and software may be the cause of your denials. When analyzing your denials, determine if the denial is:

1. one problem in which several claims all have the same denial, or
2. several problems.

You might contact your top carriers, ask them specifically what type of information they require and compare notes. You also want to make sure that you are billing the procedure correctly, according to coding convention.

**Tip:** Be prepared to offer an argument to the insurance company why they should consider your proper coding if you are appealing a denial.

If your denials are linked to one insurance company, try meeting with the provider representative and ask her to explain the denial to you. Also, ask what she can do to help you get the claims paid. Sometimes insurance companies don't understand the extent of the services that your practice provided to the patient, so try to provide a clear picture of the patient to your providers so they know exactly what your dermatologist did, and why your dermatologists performed what procedure.

As long as you are HIPAA-compliant, you may also provide a picture of the patient and the lesions removed and/or surgery performed to show the representative what the dermatologist completed.

Before you start that appeals process, make sure your physician has thoroughly documented all the procedures in the medical record. This will include the size of the grafts and donor sites and well as an operative note describing the repairs.