

## **Dermatology Coding Alert**

### **Reader Questions: 76880 Solves Your Ultrasound Conundrum**

Question: Which code should I report when the dermatologist performs an ultrasound of a skin lesion on the patient's arm? This is also known as a soft-tissue ultrasound, but the only softtissue ultrasound codes I can find refer to procedures the dermatologist completed on the patient's head or neck (76536).

Michigan Subscriber

Answer:Although the soft-tissue ultrasound code (76536, Ultrasound, soft tissues of head and neck (e.g., thyroid, parathyroid, parotid), real time with image documentation) is limited to the head and neck, you should instead report the code for ultrasound of an extremity (76880, Ultrasound, extremity, nonvascular, real time with image documentation). The descriptor for 76880 does not state "skin" or "soft tissue" but will cover an ultrasound the dermatologist performed on a patient's arm. Therefore, this is the most specific code for the procedure you describe.