Dermatology Coding Alert

You Be the Coder: 2 Sebaceous Cysts

Question: The dermatologist excised two sebaceous cysts off of the patient's back. One cyst was 4.7 cm and the other was 3.3 cm. How should I code this?

Rhode Island Subscriber

Answer: For the 4.7-cm cyst excision, assign 11406 (Excision, benign lesion including margins, except skin tag [unless listed elsewhere], trunk, arms or legs; excised diameter over 4.0 cm). Report 11404-59 (... excised diameter 3.1. to 4.0 cm; distinct procedural service) for your surgeon's removal of the 3.3-cm cyst. Reporting 11406 and 11404 is correct for three reasons:

1. The lesions were benign.
2. They were located on the patient's "trunk."
3. The cysts' measurements match the specified lesion diameters in the codes' descriptors.

Append modifier 59 (Distinct procedural service) to 11404 to show the insurer that the second excision was separate and distinct from the first procedure.