

## **Dermatology Coding Alert**

### **You Be the Coder: Unknown Skin Rash Dx**

Question: A patient recently reported to our office with a rash on his chest and abdominal area. After a level-three service the nonphysician practitioner (NPP) decided that the rash was from an "allergic reaction, cause unknown." How should I choose a diagnosis code for this patient?

Rhode Island Subscriber

Answer: There are several possibilities for coding the unknown skin rash. More information from the NPP will help to identify the ICD-9 code to append to your E/M service code. When deciding the most appropriate code, consider these options:

You may consider selections from category 692.x (Contact dermatitis and other eczema). This category includes "Dermatitis: Not Otherwise Specified (NOS), contact, occupational, venenata"; and "Eczema (acute or chronic): NOS, allergic, erythematous, occupational." You must also use a fourth or fifth digit with this category, which excludes certain types of dermatitis.