

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

Clip and Save: Skip Modifiers When You Report Stress Tests

Let the CPT definitions be your guide to component coding

If you're tempted to attach modifier -26 or -TC to cardiac stress test codes 93015-93018, think again.

You don't have to use -26 (Professional component) or -TC (Technical component), because the CPT descriptors break out the components for you, says **Lisa Center, CPC**, quality review coordinator for Freeman Health System in Joplin, Mo.

Helpful key: Use the definitions below to note which codes represent the professional, technical or global components:

1. 93015 - Cardiovascular stress test using maximal or submaximal treadmill or bicycle exercise, continuous electrocardiographic monitoring, and/or pharmacological stress; with physician supervision, with interpretation and report. This is the global code, which describes the test's technical component, the physician's supervision, interpretation and report. Use this code when the internist performs all of the work, and the practice owns the equipment.
2. 93016 - ... physician supervision only, without interpretation and report. Submit this code only for the physician's supervision, which is a professional service.
3. 93017 - ... tracing only, without interpretation and report. This code represents the physician's technical service, which means someone other than the physician provided the interpretation, the report and/or the supervision component.
4. 93018 - ... interpretation and report only. You should use 93018 for the professional services of interpretation and report.