

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

CPT Definitions for Observation and Inpatient Hospital Care Codes

The CPT 2001 definitions for observation and inpatient hospital care codes are as follows:

99217 observation care discharge day management

(This code is to be utilized by the physician to report all services provided to a patient on discharge from observation status if the discharge is on other than the initial date of observation status. To report services to a patient designated as observation status or inpatient status and discharged on the same date, use the codes for Observation or [Inpatient Care Services](#) [including Admission and Discharge Services, 99234-99236 as appropriate.]

99218-99220 initial observation care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient.

99221-99223 initial hospital care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient.

99234-99236 observation or inpatient hospital care, for the evaluation and management of a patient including admission and discharge on the same date.

99238 hospital discharge day management; 30 minutes or less.

99239 hospital discharge day management; more than 30 minutes.