

## Internal Medicine Coding Alert

### READER QUESTION: Get to Know the New Inhalation Codes

**Question:** I know that CPT introduced two new bronchodilator codes this year. How should I use them in a situation when we use inhalation for several hours straight?

North Dakota Subscriber

**Answer:** The new bronchodilator codes refer to continuous inhalation treatments that internists may perform on patients who require intensive treatment for airway obstruction.

You should assign these codes based on the total treatment time, so chart notes that clearly indicate treatment time are crucial. For the first hour of treatment, report 94644 (Continuous inhalation treatment with aerosol medication for acute airway obstruction; first hour). Then report each additional hour with +94645 (... each additional hour [list separately in addition to code for primary procedure]).

To avoid denials, never report 94645 as the only continuous inhalation treatment code. Code 94645 is an add-on code that you must "use in conjunction with 94644," states the parenthetical directive following 94645.