

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

Reader Question: Make Picture-Perfect 51798 Assignments

Question: I know that the new code 51798 replaces Medicare's G0050, but how do I know if our equipment meets the requirements for this code?

New York Subscriber

Answer: The key to correctly using code 51798 is all in the imaging. The new 2003 CPT code 51798 (Measurement of post-voiding residual urine and/or bladder capacity by ultrasound, non-imaging) should only be used with simple, hand-operated sonographic equipment that gives the volume of residual urine but does not provide an image.

If your practice is using the standard ultrasonic machine to calculate the volume of residual urine from imaging, you should report code 76775 (Ultrasound, retroperitoneal [e.g., renal, aorta, nodes], B-scan and/or real time with image documentation; limited) instead of 51798. You don't want to confuse the two, because of the difference in reimbursement 51798 pays an average of \$19.02, while the combined professional and technical components of 76775 pay an average of \$80.21, according to the 2003 nonadjusted Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Database.