

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

Reader Question: Weight-loss Visits

Question: An obese patient comes in for help with weight loss. She has normal labs and an unremarkable exam, and is given medication for appetite control. How do you code this visit and subsequent visits for weight loss?

Anonymous TX subscriber

Answer: Its tough to get paid for this unless the obesity is causing some other type of medical problems, Stephenson notes. Weight-loss visits are not usually considered medically necessary without more serious problems present, and then you have to go to great lengths to prove the obesity is causing the other condition. You should consider calling the insurance carrier involved and see what they require for correct coding. If any reimbursement is available, they will probably need more than just the HCFA 1500 form to process it. So, checking in advance may save you time by alleviating resubmissions.