

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

Reader Questions: Be Wary of Time When Discharging Patients

Question: Before discharging the patient from the hospital, our internist spends more than 30 minutes examining her, and giving instructions for continuing care and medication to her family. Should I bill 99239?

Nevada Subscriber

Answer: You may report 99239 (Physician discharge management; over 30 minutes) provided documentation indicates the floor time (the time the internist spent preparing and dictating the discharge summary) and what the internist did.

Reminder: The time that the internist spends on discharge planning doesn't need to occur in one continuous block. You should count discharge day services on the day the internist provides face-to-face services to the patient.