

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

Reader Questions: Check Each Component Before Submitting 80053

Question: The physician ordered a basic metabolic panel and hepatic function panel for a patient. Do we report 80053 since it includes the other tests?

Answer: No, you should code each panel individually with 80047 (Basic metabolic [Calcium, ionized]. .) or 80048 (Basic metabolic panel [Calcium, total] ...) for the basic metabolic panel and 80076 (Hepatic function panel ...). Pay special attention to the tests each panel must include before you can report the code:

- Code 80047 includes ionized calcium, carbon dioxide, chloride, creatinine, glucose, potassium, sodium, and urea nitrogen (BUN)
- Code 80048 includes total calcium, carbon dioxide, chloride, creatinine, glucose, potassium, sodium, and urea nitrogen (BUN)
- Code 80076 includes albumin, total bilirubin, direct bilirubin, alkaline phosphatase, total protein, alanine amino transferase (ALT) (SGPT), and aspartate amino transferase (AST) (SGOT).

Now consider 80053 (Comprehensive metabolic panel; this panel must include the following: Albumin [82040], Bilirubin, total [82247], Calcium, total [82310], Carbon dioxide [bicarbonate] [82374], Chloride [82435], Creatinine [82565], Glucose [82947], Phosphatase, alkaline [84075], Potassium [84132], Protein, total [84155], Sodium [84295], Transferase, alanine amino [ALT] [SGPT] [84460], Transferase, aspartate amino [AST] [SGOT] [84450], Urea nitrogen [BUN] [84520]).

Before you can report a comprehensive lab code for several panels, be sure the comprehensive code includes everything covered by the other panels. Code 80053 includes many of the tests covered by 80047, 80048 and 80076, but not all. For example, 80076 includes a test for direct bilirubin, but 80053 does not.