

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

READER QUESTIONS: Count Readmission as Separate Service

Question: An internist discharges a patient from the hospital and readmits the patient to the same hospital on the next day. Should I code for the second admission service?

Maryland Subscriber

Answer: Yes. You should report the admission with 99221-99223 (Initial hospital care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient ...). A discharge service (99238-99239, Hospital discharge day management ...) ends any hospital stay, making a subsequent admission on a following service date appropriate.

Key: The internist must provide a complete history and physical on the admission date to qualify for 99221-99223. Choose the appropriate E/M level based on the key components of a history, exam and medical decision-making that the internist performs and documents.