

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

READER QUESTIONS: Get Up-to-Date on 2005's Nebulizer Drug Codes

Question: The nurse gave a patient Albuterol, and I reported J7618 for the medication. Our carrier denied the claim. What could I have done wrong?

North Carolina Subscriber

Answer: As of Jan. 1, 2005, you should not be using nebulizer medication codes J7618-J7619 because HCPCS 2005 deleted them. Instead, you should report the following new J codes:

1. J7611 - Albuterol, inhalation solution, administered through DME, concentrated form, 1 mg
2. J7612 - Levalbuterol, inhalation solution, administered through DME, concentrated form, 0.5 mg
3. J7613 - Albuterol, inhalation solution, administered through DME, unit dose, 1 mg
4. J7614 - Levalbuterol, inhalation solution, administered through DME, unit dose, 0.5 mg.

Good news: The new codes make reporting nebulizer medications easier. You no longer have to lump Albuterol and Levalbuterol together as J7618 (Albuterol, all formulations including separated isomers, inhalation solution administered through DME, concentrated form, per 1 mg [Albuterol] or per 0.5 mg [Levalbuterol]) or J7619 (Albuterol, all formulations including separated isomers, inhalation solution administered through DME, unit dose, per 1 mg [Albuterol] or per 0.5 mg [Levalbuterol]). Using the same codes can prove confusing because the doses for each medication are different.

Bottom line: When coding nebulizer medication, you can now locate the right code by identifying the medication name - albuterol (Ventolin, Proventil) or levalbuterol (Xopenex) - and form - concentrated versus premixed or unit-dose.