

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

Reader Questions: Here's When to Report Steroid Therapy History

Question: I see that ICD-9 2010 introduced a new code for personal history of inhaled steroid therapy (V87.44) -- could you give a scenario when I might use this code?

North Carolina Subscriber

Answer: Good question! Many internists may forget to add this code on those patients receiving inhaled corticosteroids.

You could conceivably report V87.44 (Personal history of inhaled steroid therapy) on any asthmatic or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) patient receiving inhaled steroid therapy. Use the asthma (493.xx) or COPD (496) codes before listing the V code.

Example: You might assign a stable asthmatic a code sequence of 493.00 and V87.44, in addition to any other codes that affected the patient's health, such as gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD, 530.81) or hypertension (401.9). Similarly, for a patient with COPD, you would report 496 and V87.44. Using the V code would justify the need for laboratory or other diagnostic testing (for instance, bone density studies) that an internist uses for patients who are on chronic steroid therapy and have manifestations or side effects of treatment.