

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

You Be the Coder: Telephone Calls

Question: Our physician consulted with a patient over the telephone regarding the management of the patients drugs. Are codes 99371-99373 (telephone call by physician to patient) billable for this service? Will any carriers reimburse for these?

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Test your coding knowledge. Determine how you would code this situation before looking at the box below for the answer.

Answer: Codes 99371-99373 are the correct codes to report telephone calls from the physician to the patient or other healthcare providers to discuss medical management of a patients condition and results of lab and other diagnostic tests, according to **Sandy Page, CPC, CCS-P**, co-owner of Medical Practice Support Services, a medical practice consulting firm in Broomfield, Colo. But not many payers reimburse separately for these services.

According to Section 5200.5 of the Medicare Carriers Manual, the services rendered by a physician directly to a patient over the telephone generally are not separately payable by Medicare. Most private payers have followed Medicares lead in this area and also will not reimburse separately for these services.