

Optometry Coding & Billing Alert

Clip and Save: Make Sure Your E/M Documentation Measures Up

Use these handy definitions to determine if an E/M or eye code is more appropriate

When you're preparing to code an office visit, documentation is the key to being able to justify the level of code you report. Use this chart to help determine which code -- and which level -- fits the scenario.

E/M Codes

New patient

Has not seen the optometrist, or another optometrist in the same group practice, within the past three years.

- 99201: Problem-focused history, problem-focused exam, and straightforward medical decision-making
- 99202: Expanded problem-focused history, expanded problem-focused exam, and straightforward medical decision-making
- 99203: Detailed history, detailed exam, and low-complexity medical decision-making
- 99204: Comprehensive history, comprehensive exam, and moderate-complexity medical decision-making
- 99205: Comprehensive history, comprehensive exam, and high-complexity medical decision-making.

Established patient

Has seen the optometrist, or another optometrist in the same group, within the past three years.

- 99211: May not require the presence of a physician
- 99212: Two of three: problem-focused history, problem-focused exam, or straightforward medical decision-making
- 99213: Two of three: expanded history, expanded exam, or low-complexity medical decision-making
- 99214: Two of three: detailed history, detailed exam, or moderate-complexity medical decision-making
- 99215: Two of three: comprehensive history, comprehensive exam, or high-complexity medical decision-making.

Note: To differentiate between different levels of service, see -Instructions for Selecting a Level of E/M Service- in the E/M codes- introduction in the CPT book.

General Ophthalmological Services Codes

New patient

Has not seen the optometrist, or another optometrist in the same group practice, within the past three years.

- 92002 -- Ophthalmological services: medical examination and evaluation with initiation of diagnostic and treatment program; intermediate, new patient

- 92004 -- - comprehensive, new patient, one or more visits.

Established patient

Has seen the optometrist, or another optometrist in the same group, within the past three years.

- 92012 -- Ophthalmological services: medical examination and evaluation, with initiation or continuation of diagnostic and treatment program; intermediate, established patient

- 92014 -- - comprehensive, established patient, one or more visits.

According to CPT guidelines, an intermediate ophthalmological service is -an evaluation of a new or existing condition complicated with a new diagnostic or management problem.-

A comprehensive ophthalmological service -always includes initiation of diagnostic and treatment programs. This may include:

- Prescription of medication, lenses and other therapy - Arranging for special ophthalmological, diagnostic or treatment services
- Consultation
- Laboratory procedures
- Radiological services as may be indicated.

Note: Check with your carrier for additional rules pertaining to intermediate and comprehensive services.