

Optometry Coding & Billing Alert

Reader Question: Focus on 'Incident-to' Rules

Question: The following scenario occurred in our practice: Physician A covered an established patient office visit for physician B who was across the street with a patient in the hospital. They want me to bill the office visit incident-to physician B even though he was not in the office at the time. Can I do that?

Codify Subscriber

Answer: You should not report this service incident to physician B.

Incident-to billing doesn't apply between two physicians. You cannot bill services provided by one physician under another physician's name or national provider identifier (NPI). Billing under the name of a physician who did not perform the service could lead to allegations of false claims submissions.

Incident-to billing may apply when a mid-level provider or non-physician practitioner (NPP), such as a physician assistant (PA), nurse practitioner (NP), or clinical nurse specialist, provides a service under the direct supervision of a physician. If the service meets incident to criteria, you can bill the service under the physician's NPI rather than the NPP's.

In this case, physician A should bill for the service.