

Optometry Coding & Billing Alert

Reader Questions: Don't Add Unnecessary Digit to 368.8

Question: Lately all of our claims with diagnosis code 368.80 for blurred vision have been rejected. If I find another diagnosis as the cause of the blurred vision, like cataracts, I use the cataract diagnosis as the primary diagnosis. But there are many times when I can find no other contributing cause, except for a possible change in refraction. Is there some other possible reason for the denial that we may be overlooking?

Ohio Subscriber

Answer: The most likely explanation is that the ICD-9 code for blurred vision is 368.8 (Other specified visual disturbances) rather than 368.80, which doesn't exist as a code.

Experts say Medicare should pay for the office visit with an accurate diagnosis code of 368.8 (although you may find some payers consider it a routine exam).

Note: You're correct to report cataracts as primary when this diagnosis applies to the patient.