

## Optometry Coding & Billing Alert

### READER QUESTIONS: Don't Count on Cash for Education

**Question:** Is there a way we can offset the cost of educational materials, pamphlets, etc., that we provide to patients and payers?

Maryland Subscriber

**Answer:** CPT does contain a code for educational materials: 99071 (Educational supplies, such as books, tapes and pamphlets, provided by the physician for the patient's education at cost to physician). You might check with your payers to see if they will reimburse you for the cost of educational materials using 99071. But don't be surprised if most payers decline.

As an alternative, you could ask payers to have their beneficiaries cover the cost of educational materials directly. Note that this is not permissible for Medicare beneficiaries.

Keep in mind, however, that it may be worth your while to cover the cost of such materials yourself--if it cuts down on the number of follow-up calls and other unbillable activities you are forced to handle.