

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 ask your payers 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.

Opportunity: 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.

Providing educational materials is a great way to market your practice and the services you offer that patients might not know about.

If patients pass this information on to family and friends, so much the better.