

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

-59 Modifier Under Scrutiny, Expert Warns

The -59 modifier may get your claims paid, but you could be storing up a world of hurt for later if you overuse it.

"It's overused just to get through the edits," consultant **Annette Grady** with **Eide Bailly** in Bismarck, ND says of the -59 modifier. It's often hard to figure out when to use -59 appropriately, but it's vital to do so.

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** is currently looking closely at -59, Grady believes. While each carrier and payor has different claims review software, it's a safe assumption that many carriers will single out claims with the -59 modifier for extra scrutiny. The North Dakota Medicaid program actually handles all claims with the -59 modifier by hand, Grady adds. "It automatically pops them out," and reviewers go over the claims for medical necessity.

Part B carrier **Noridian** subjects claims with the -59 modifier to a post-payment or prepayment audit, Grady insists.