

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

CONSIDER BILLING BASED ON TIME

If the physician is talking to family members with a demented patient present, it may be difficult to separate out history from counseling, notes **George Alex**. The conversation may become more of a dialogue, and the physician may note in the chart that lengthy discussions were held with family members. In a lot of cases, the physician may spend most of the visit discussing options, including new drugs that are available, with the family members.

In this case, you should consider billing for the visit based on time, as counseling and coordination of care.

Also, some forms of dementia testing may straddle the lines between a mental status examination and a physical examination, and it may be easier to bill based on time. Otherwise, you may end up being forced to bill an unlisted E/M code , warns Alex.