

## Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

### CORRECT CODING INITIATIVE: CCI Version 11.3 Puts A Block On Nerve Blocks

#### But you no longer need a modifier for some neurology code pairs

If your physician performs procedures to destroy the somatic or sympathetic nerves, you won't be able to bill for a nerve block with those procedures.

Starting in October, a sweeping set of edits will bundle nerve block introduction/injection codes 64400-64413, 64418-64449, 64479, 64483 and 64505-64530.

Each of those codes will become a component of 51 or 52 other nervous system codes. The comprehensive codes include:

- codes 64612-64614, 64630 and 64681, for destruction of the somatic and sympathetic nerves by a neurolytic agent;
- neuroplasty codes 64702-64726;
- transection/avulsion codes 64732-64772;
- somatic nerve excision codes 64774-64776, 64782, 64784-64786, 64788-64795; and
- sympathetic nerve excision codes 64802-64823.

Also, 64400, 64402, 64420, 64421, 64430 and 64479 and 64483 and 64505 and 64508 are all components of miscellaneous nerve destruction code 64640.

"I knew this was coming," says **Christina Olson**, consultant and auditor with **South Oakland Services** in Warren, MI. The carriers have been "cranky" about paying for a nerve block on the same day as these other procedures.

Carriers like to see a nice, tidy diagnostic pattern where the physician tries a nerve block first, and then if it provides temporary relief, they use a neurolytic agent to destroy the nerve. Using a nerve block on the same date as a neurolytic agent muddies that picture, Olson explains.

You should still be able to bill for a separate nerve block using a modifier, if the doctor is performing it on a different body part, notes Olson. For example, while the doctor is using a neurolytic agent on the lower back, she may try a nerve block on the upper back if the patient has both upper and lower back pain.

CCI 11.3 also deletes several edits that may have been making your life more complicated. You'll no longer need a modifier to bill for nerve-destruction codes 64622 and 64680 with half a dozen codes for injection of neurolytic agents and anesthetic agents. Similarly, four injection codes (62311, 62319, 64450 and 64475) are no longer components of nerve-destruction codes 64620 and 64626.

Also, injection code 62310 is no longer a component of nerve-destruction code 64623, 62311 is no longer a component of 64627, and 64470 is no longer a component of 64681.