

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

CPT Changes: New Catheter and Line Placement Codes, New Injection Codes

2004 brings sweeping changes to CPT codes

If you know all the important codes in your practice by heart, then you might want to give yourself a clean slate.

The 2004 version of the Current Procedural Terminology, now on its way to coders, includes some sweeping changes that could affect the way you code for every procedure your physician performs. For example:

CPT 2004 completely revamps the catheter and line placement codes to add more specifics and reduce muddle. The new version deletes codes 36488-36493 and 36530-36537 to make way for a number of new codes from 36555 to 36589.

The new CPT book includes two new injection codes that will allow anesthesiologists to bill more specifically: 64449 (Injection, anesthetic agent; lumbar plexus, posterior approach, continuous infusion by catheter [including catheter placement] including daily management for anesthetic agent administration) and 64517 (Injection, anesthetic agent; superior hypogastric plexus).

Also helpful to anesthesiologists will be new code 00529 (Anesthesia for closed chest procedures; mediastinoscopy and diagnostic thoracoscopy utilizing one-lung ventilation). CPT 2004 also revised the descriptor for comparable code 00528 to clarify that it doesn't apply to one-lung ventilation.

As many experts expected, CPT has added a new fluoroscopic guidance code (+75998) for use with central guidance codes. Also, the new version has a code for ultrasound guidance for vascular access (+76937).

Instead of billing for 01120 (Anesthesia for procedures on bony pelvis) or 01170 (Anesthesia for open procedures involving symphysis pubis or sacroiliac joint) you'll have a new code to bill for open repairs of fracture disruption of pelvis or column fractures involving the acetabulum, 01173. You can still use 01120 or 01170 for other bony pelvis cases, says **Debbie Gullede** with Anesthesia Associates of Rockhill in Charlotte, N.C.

Pathologists gain a number of new codes, including 84156 (Protein, total, except by refractometry; urine) and 84157 (... other source); 85055 (Reticulated platelet assay); 85396 (Coagulation/fibrinolysis assay, whole blood); and 87269 (Infectious agent antigen detection by immunofluorescent technique; giardia).