

## Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

### Diagnosis Coding: SARS and Monkey Pox Codes on the Way

- Hundreds of New [ICD-9 Codes](#) in the Works

One of the scariest things about a new epidemic is not knowing how you'll code it if it turns up in your practice. Take severe acute respiratory syndrome, SARS, which required guesswork and head-scratching - until now.

Even though SARS had a devastating effect worldwide - killing 800 people and infecting approximately 8,500-no codes have existed to diagnose the disease. The new version of the ICD-9 diagnosis coding, which takes effect in October, includes three SARS-related codes: V71.83 (Observation, suspected disorder [SARS]), 079.82 (SARS-associated coronavirus) and 480.3 (Pneumonia due to SARS-associated coronavirus).

And more codes for SARS and monkey pox will be in the final ICD-9 updates, due soon, says **Amy Blum** with the **National Center for Health Statistics** at the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**, which develops ICD-9 codes.

The latest update to October's proposed code set, posted June 18, includes hundreds of additions and deletions.

"There really are no revolutionary changes to ICD-9 this year, but there are a number of interesting new codes," says **Marcella Bucknam, CPC, CCS-P, CPC-H, CCA**, HIM program coordinator at Clarkson College in Omaha, Neb.

"New signs and symptoms codes will be helpful in describing some of those situations that are hard to code when you don't have a definitive diagnosis," Bucknam says. These include codes for early satiety (780.94), facial weakness (781.94), septic shock (785.52), urgency of urination (788.63), impaired fasting glucose (790.21), impaired glucose tolerance test (oral) (790.22), other abnormal glucose (790.29), decreased libido (799.81), and other ill-defined conditions (799.89).

New ICD-9 codes for 2004 will also allow you to report several conditions or circumstances, including muscle weakness (728.87) and converted surgeries, and in one case will simplify coding by eliminating a fifth digit from an already-existing diagnosis.

Editor's note: to see the latest version of the updates, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/datawh/ftp/ftpicd9/ftp/ftpicd9.htm> and scroll down to "Addenda."