

## Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

### Insulin Urban Legend Can Make Your Life Difficult

**Myth:** You should list your patient as having Type I diabetes if the patient needs insulin.

**Fact:** You can use 0 or 2 as the fifth digit even if the patient needs insulin. Some Type II diabetics require insulin. In these cases, you should add V58.67 (Long-term [current] use of insulin) in those cases.

**Warning:** If you're using an outdated ICD-9 book or -cheat sheet,- you may not realize the rules for 250.xx changed on Oct. 1, 2004, says coding expert **Marie West**. Since then, the fifth digit depends on pancreatic functioning, not insulin use.

Many physicians continue to base their diagnosis of Type I or Type II on insulin dependency, because it's -too much of a hassle- to test the patient's pancreas, says **George Ward**, billing supervisor with **South of Market Health Care** in San Francisco.

But it's an important distinction, says diabetes educator **Beverly Dyck Thomassian**. The difference between the two types doesn't depend on the treatment, but on the patient's pathology and what caused the problem, she adds.