

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

PODIATRY: Keep Your Gait Analysis Claims Steady

Helpful hint: Double-check your Medicare carrier's coverage guidelines for each.

If you report 97166, 97799 or 95999 for gait analysis, you are walking straight into a denial.

Reason: The **BCBS Montana Medicare Local Coverage Determination** is typical of many carrier determinations when it states: "Gait analysis performed as a diagnostic test is considered inclusive in the E/M service and not separately payable. It should not be coded or billed as 97116 (Therapeutic procedure, one or more areas, each 15 minutes; gait training [including stair climbing]), 97799 (Unlisted physical medicine/rehabilitation service or procedure), or 95999 (Unlisted neurological or neuromuscular diagnostic procedure)." These codes are often incorrectly used to bill for gait analysis services.

The right way: Report gait analysis using only five codes: 96000-96004. The first four are lab test codes, and you can report more than one of these codes at the same time, depending on the tests the lab performs:

- 96000--(Comprehensive computer-based motion analysis...)
- 96001--(...with dynamic plantar pressure measurements during walking)
- 96002--(Dynamic surface electromyography...)
- 96003--(Dynamic fine wire electromyography...)
- 96004 (Physician review and interpretation...with written report)

You should report 96004 when the doctor reviews the test results and provides a written report.

Don't forget: Make sure you link your CPT codes to a diagnosis code on your Medicare carrier's list of diagnoses that prove medical necessity for gait testing--such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida or hemiplegia.

Tip: Before performing a gait analysis, check with Medicare to make sure the service is covered, suggests podiatry biller **Tempie G.** with **Professional Coding Connection** in Virginia Beach, VA. Checking with your carrier is important because there may be certain circumstances under which it may cover gait analysis even if it normally denies coverage.