

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Reader Question: Know Which Doctor Spends the Most Time With Patient

Question: A recent surgical case involved two of our anesthesiologists: one for two hours and the other for three hours. How do we bill for their time?

Answer: Most practices will bill the case under a single physician instead of submitting separate claims for each anesthesiologist's role. Report the case based on the anesthesiologist who was involved for the longest period of time (the second physician in your example). The billing tends to even out over time since the other physician probably will have the longest period of time for another shared case.

Exception: If the two anesthesiologists or an anesthesiologist and a certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA) perform separate functions and work simultaneously during a complex or difficult surgery, you'll bill the full amounts of time for each provider. Just make sure documentation supports the medical necessity of both providers.