

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

READER QUESTION: Should Physical Therapists Bill Under Their Own Provider Numbers?

Make sure your PTs meet new certification requirements

Q: Can a physical therapist bill Medicare for her own services, such as PT Evaluation, orthotic evaluation, ADL evaluation and patient education? The referral would be from a physician of the same group.

NY Subscriber

A: Yes, physical therapists (PTs) can bill under their own provider numbers, says **Pat Larabee**, a coding specialist at **InterMed** in South Portland, ME. You can also have your physical therapists bill -incident to- your physician's services if they don't have their own provider numbers.

If the physical therapist is a member of a physician group, then you should bill the claims under the group's ID number, with the therapist listed as the rendering provider, says **Stephanie Fiedler** with **Loeb & Troper** in New York.

There's no such thing as a -patient education- service that a PT can bill, Fiedler adds. PTs generally provide re-evaluation services, which include education as part of establishing a maintenance program and you should bill for these under their regular therapeutic interventions, Fiedler adds.

Important: PTs can only bill for CPT codes within the range of 97001-97799, Fiedler points out.

You should list the referring practitioner on the claim, notes **Collette Shrader**, compliance and education coordinator with **Wenatchee Valley Medical Center** in Wenatchee, WA.

Check your state requirements: Some states, such as New York, no longer require physical therapists to have a doctor's referral to perform an evaluation, notes Fiedler. But Medicare generally requires a doctor to order the evaluation and certify the services, she adds.

Watch out: Medicare has tightened the rules as to who can work as a physical therapist, notes **Quinten Buechner** with **ProActive Consulting** in Cumberland, WI.

A physical therapist must be state licensed, and must have graduated from a physical therapy curriculum approved by the **American Physical Therapy Association**, the **American Medical Association**, or the **Council on Medical Education** of both organizations, according to Part B carrier NHIC.

Editor's note: To read NHIC's physical therapy -billing guide,- go to www.medicarenhic.com, click on -Part B--New England,- click on -Publications- on the left side, and then go to -billing guides.-