

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Reader Questions: Modifier 79 Denotes Unplanned Procedure During Global

Question: Eight days after an initial wart freezing, the patient returns, and the physician freezes another wart. Is the second procedure bundled into the first, or can we report it with a modifier?

Answer: You may be able to report the second occurrence of 17110 (Destruction [e.g., laser surgery, electrosurgery, cryosurgery, chemosurgery, surgical curettement], of benign lesions other than skin tags or cutaneous scular proliferative lesions; up to 14 lesions) if the documentation specifies that the treatment is for a different wart than the first procedure.

Medicare assigns 17110 a 10-day global period, so the patient in this case definitely had a second procedure within the global period of the first.

Append modifier 79 (Unplanned procedure or service by the same physician during the postoperative period) to 17110.