

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Top Lab Tests Ordered by Physicians

New statistics released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show those laboratory tests most frequently ordered or performed during physician office visits.

According to the CDC's National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey, nearly 880.5 million visits were made to doctors' offices in 2001, resulting in over 244 million lab tests ordered or performed by physicians. Over 53 percent of all physician office visits were made by patients ages 45 and older - up from 42.3 percent in 1992 - indicating that baby boomers are accounting for more and more of such visits.

Based on NAMCS estimates, the most common lab tests ordered or performed in 2001 were:

1. complete blood count (CBC)
2. urinalysis
3. cholesterol
4. Pap tests
5. hematocrit/hemoglobin
6. prostate-specific antigen (PSA).