

Eli's Rehab Report

Reader Question: No Anesthesia, No 15852

Question: One of our patients was in the rehab facility recovering from an automobile accident. When the physiatrist saw him, the patient required extensive dressing changes, including minor tissue debridement and irrigations. Are these services billable?

Alaska Subscriber

Answer: You can bill dressing changes only if the physician performs them on a patient who is under general anesthesia. If this is the case, you can report 15852 (Dressing change [for other than burns] under anesthesia [other than local]).

If not, the dressing changes are bundled into the surgical procedure or, if you assumed care only after the surgery, your E/M code for that day.

You can, however, report the debridement using the appropriate code from the 11040-11044 code series. If you performed the surgery, you should append modifier -58 (Staged or related procedure or service by the same physician during the postoperative period) to ensure that the payer doesn't bundle it into the surgical procedure. If you did not perform the surgical procedure yourself, you do not need to append a modifier to the debridement code.