

## Outpatient Facility Coding Alert

### ICD-10: Report One Code for Pressure Ulcer in 2014 With Specific Location Choices

**Heads up: You'll move from 14 code possibilities to more than 150.**

Under the current version of ICD-9, you must report two codes for clear documentation of a pressure (decubitus) ulcer diagnosis under ICD-9 -- one code for the location, and the other to report the stage. All that changes when ICD-10 goes into effect.

**Future:** You'll need just one code to report the pressure ulcer location and stage when ICD-10 goes into effect in October 2014. Your code options will explode, however, because you'll shift from a current list of 14 code choices to more than 150 in ICD-10.

Step 1: Identify the Pressure Ulcer Site

With ICD-9, you have nine "location" codes to choose from for the ulcer site, as follows:

707.00 -- Pressure ulcer; unspecified site

707.01 -- ... elbow

707.02 -- ... upper back

707.03 -- ... lower back

707.04 -- ... hip

707.05 -- ... buttock

707.06 -- ... ankle

707.07 -- ... heel

707.09 -- ... other site.

ICD-10 provides much greater site specificity, creating many more code options. For example, your choices will include:

L89.9\_ -- Pressure ulcer of unspecified site

L89.00\_ -- Pressure ulcer of unspecified elbow

L89.01\_ -- Pressure ulcer of right elbow

L89.02\_ -- Pressure ulcer of left elbow

L89.10\_ -- Pressure ulcer of unspecified part of back

L89.11\_ -- Pressure ulcer of right upper back

L89.12\_ -- Pressure ulcer of left upper back

- L89.13\_ -- Pressure ulcer of right lower back
- L89.14\_ -- Pressure ulcer of left lower back
- L89.15\_ -- Pressure ulcer of sacral region
- L89.20\_ -- Pressure ulcer of unspecified hip
- L89.21\_ -- Pressure ulcer of right hip
- L89.22\_ -- Pressure ulcer of left hip
- L89.30\_ -- Pressure ulcer of unspecified buttock
- L89.31\_ -- Pressure ulcer of right buttock
- L89.32\_ -- Pressure ulcer of left buttock
- L89.4\_ -- Pressure ulcer of contiguous site of back, buttock and hip
- L89.50\_ -- Pressure ulcer of unspecified ankle
- L89.51\_ -- Pressure ulcer of right ankle
- L89.52\_ -- Pressure ulcer of left ankle
- L89.60\_ -- Pressure ulcer of unspecified heel
- L89.61\_ -- Pressure ulcer of right heel
- L89.62\_ -- Pressure ulcer of left heel
- L89.81\_ -- Pressure ulcer of head
- L89.89\_ -- Pressure ulcer of other site.

Step 2: Choose the Pressure Ulcer Stage

If you look at the pressure ulcer site code 707.0x, ICD-9 includes a directive to "Use additional code to identify pressure ulcer stage (707.20-707.25)."

The current "stage" codes provide the following diagnostic information:

- 707.21 -- Pressure ulcer, stage I. This stage involves intact skin with redness of a localized area, usually over a bony prominence.
- 707.22 -- Pressure ulcer, stage II. Stage II ulcers may have intact or ruptured serum-filled blisters and a partial-thickness loss of dermis.
- 707.23 -- Pressure ulcer, stage III. Full-thickness tissue loss is characteristic of this stage, possibly with subcutaneous fat visible.
- 707.24 -- Pressure ulcer, stage IV. Exposed bone, tendon or muscle from full-thickness tissue loss defines this stage.
- 707.25 -- Pressure ulcer, unstageable. Report this code when the physician is unable to ascertain the ulcer's stage or doesn't document it well enough for coding purposes.

ICD-10 recognizes the same four stages -- plus two more for "unstageable" or "unspecified stage" pressure ulcers.

Instead of using an additional code to capture the stage information, however, each of the site codes includes a final digit to account for these six "stage" choices.

**For instance:** L89.11\_ expands to the following six codes:

L89.110 -- Pressure ulcer of right upper back, unstageable

L89.111 -- ... stage 1

L89.112 -- ... stage 2

L89.113 -- ... stage 3

L89.114 -- ... stage 4

L89.119 -- ... unspecified stage.