

Outpatient Facility Coding Alert

Reader Question: Check Bilateral Surgery Indicator Before Billing Bilaterally

Question: Can I use modifier 50 when submitting code 17110 if lesions were removed from both feet?

California Subscriber

Answer: Whenever considering modifier 50 (Bilateral Procedure) eligibility, you should look up the respective code's bilateral surgery indicator. The bilateral surgery indicator for code 17110 (Destruction (eg, laser surgery, electrosurgery, cryosurgery, chemosurgery, surgical curettage), of benign lesions other than skin tags or cutaneous vascular proliferative lesions; up to 14 lesions) is 0, which means that modifier 50 is not eligible for use. Upon further examination of the code, this makes sense based on the fact that the code description focuses on number of lesions destroyed, regardless of laterality.