Outpatient Facility Coding Alert

Reader Question: Know the Joint the Physician Treated

Question: How should I code tendon injections to both of the patient's thumbs and both third digits during the same visit? She is a Medicare patient.

Montana Subscriber

Answer: The correct injection code is 20550 (Injections[s]; single tendon sheath, or ligament, aponeurosis [e.g., plantar "fascia"]), but you also need to specify which joints the physician treated to distinguish the injections from each other. The CMS-1500 form allows you to document specific joints in Box 19, and some coders say including the designations with the procedure code helps clarify the procedure.