

Outpatient Facility Coding Alert

You Be the Coder: Know How to Couple Anemia and Colonoscopy

Question: Can I use the diagnosis of iron deficiency anemia for a colonoscopy? The patient had a normal colon in 2010 with a repeat suggested by another physician in 5-10 years. The patient was referred by an oncology group due to low iron studies.

Texas Subscriber

Answer: Yes. You can use iron deficiency anemia for a colonoscopy if the provider has determined that the patient has this diagnosis. You will choose a code from the group 280.x (Diseases of the blood and blood-forming organs; Iron deficiency anemias) with a fourth digit (0-9) expansion to specify the origin of the anemia.

Option 2: If the provider has not definitively diagnosed the iron deficiency anemia, a better choice would be 790.6 (Other abnormal blood chemistry), which will pinpoint the abnormal blood levels of one or more of the following:

- Cobalt
- Copper
- Iron
- Lead
- Lithium
- Magnesium
- Mineral
- Zinc

Caveat: Ask your physician for a definitive diagnosis before coding the service, as some insurance companies may not cover 790.6. The diagnostic colonoscopy service to investigate a new condition of iron deficiency will not be covered as routine screening under the Accountable Care Act and will be subject to deductibles and co-payments.