

Psychiatry Coding & Reimbursement Alert

You Be the Coder: Base Psychotherapy Codes on Time, Not Place of Service

Question: The earlier code sets for psychotherapy depended on place of service (POS). But, I don't see any such reference in the new codes. Is place of service (POS) important while reporting the new psychotherapy codes?

New York Subscriber

Answer: The new codes for psychotherapy effective Jan.1, 2013 have simplified your job. You will no longer need to base your reporting a psychotherapy session on place of service (POS) as you used to do when you were using the earlier code sets.

Regardless of the POS, you only have to choose from three codes depending on the time that your psychiatrist or clinical psychologist spent on performing psychotherapy. So, when you report 90832 (Psychotherapy, 30 minutes with patient and/or family member), 90834 (Psychotherapy, 45 minutes...) or 90837 (Psychotherapy, 60 minutes...) to report a psychotherapy session that your clinician performed, you will not have to worry about the place in which this service was performed.

However, if your psychiatrist provided an evaluation and management (E/M) service along with performing the psychotherapy session, POS considerations will be of importance in choosing the right E/M code for the service. You will only need to consider the place of service to choose the right E/M while the add-on psychotherapy codes will only rely on the time spent on the psychotherapy session and not on the POS.