

Psychiatry Coding & Reimbursement Alert

You Be the Coder: Know if Group Psychotherapy is a Time Based Code

Question: I am new to psychiatry coding. Recently, our psychiatrist undertook a group psychotherapy session. I have noticed that psychotherapy codes have a time component. So, should I report group psychotherapy sessions on the basis of time, or should I just stick to reporting one unit of the code for a calendar date of service?

Missouri Subscriber

Answer: As you have rightly said, individual psychotherapy sessions are reported on the basis of time that your psychiatrist spends in performing the session. However, when it comes to group psychotherapy, the code 90853 (Group psychotherapy [other than of a multiple-family group]) that you report has no time component attached to it. You just have to report one unit of the code on one calendar date of service irrespective of the time that your clinician spent in performing the session.

However, you need to remember to report one unit of the code for every patient that participated in the group psychotherapy session and not once for the entire group. So, if the session had for instance, six patients, you report 90853x6.