

## Home Health ICD-9/ICD-10 Alert

### Reader Question: Get to Know Skin Cancer Changes

Question: Our new patient has a squamous cell carcinoma on her shoulder. Which diagnosis code should we report?

Maryland Subscriber

Answer: List 173.62 (Squamous cell carcinoma of skin of upper limb, including shoulder) to describe your patient's skin cancer. Thanks to the 2012 expansion of the 173.x section of ICD-9 (Other malignant neoplasm of skin), you'll find the various types of skin cancer specified in much greater detail as of Oct. 1, 2011.

If the patient had instead reported with an unspecified malignant neoplasm, 173.60 would be the right choice, whereas basal cell carcinoma of the upper limb would be coded with 173.61. You'll find that 173.69 will describe an "other specified malignant neoplasm" of the upper limb.

What this means: Lab reports and thorough physician documentation are of the utmost importance when reporting skin cancers, since you need to know the specific type of skin cancer before you can select the most accurate ICD-9 code.