

Home Health ICD-9/ICD-10 Alert

READER QUESTIONS: Bowel Obstruction Code Depends On Documentation

Question: In the March issue of Home Health ICD-9 Alert, there's a coding scenario on page 21 that describes a patient who had a partial colectomy to treat a bowel obstruction.

You mention that if the bowel obstruction still exists after the surgery, you would continue to code the condition, but you don't suggest any codes. How would I code for a bowel obstruction that wasn't corrected after surgery?

Oklahoma Subscriber

Answer: You can code for bowel obstruction with 560.9 (Unspecified intestinal obstruction) unless you have more specific information about the obstruction. If you are able, it's a good idea to ask the physician for a more detailed diagnosis so you can select a more specific code.