

Home Health ICD-9/ICD-10 Alert

READER QUESTIONS: Check With Doc Before Coding Grief

Question: What ICD-9 codes should I use when a patient exhibits signs of depression but has not been diagnosed with depression? We're providing aftercare for hip replacement surgery for a patient whose husband just died. She had insomnia and was not eating much, but her physician did not think she met the parameters for depressive disorder.

Vermont Subscriber

Answer: Code for grief reaction with 309.0 (Adjustment disorder with depressed mood). But first ask the physician if this diagnosis is acceptable. You should never assign a code for a psychiatric diagnosis unless the physician has specifically documented the condition.