

Home Health ICD-9/ICD-10 Alert

READER QUESTIONS: Does Debridement Change Pressure Ulcer Coding?

Question: Is a debrided ulcer considered a nonhealing chronic wound or is it a nonhealing surgical wound?

-- Washington Subscriber

Answer: You should consider a debrided ulcer to be an ulcer and code it as such. Debridement does not make the ulcer a surgical wound. The best strategy is to go with the wound's origin.

For example, your patient has a previously staged stage IV pressure ulcer on the hip covered with eschar and slough. She undergoes sharp debridement. You would still code the wound as a pressure ulcer. Debridement is an ulcer treatment and does not make the pressure ulcer a surgical wound.

So, at first you would code for the pressure ulcer with 707.04 (Pressure ulcer; hip) and 707.25 (Pressure ulcer, unstageable). After the debridement, you would report the pressure ulcer with 707.04 and 707.24 (Pressure ulcer stage IV).