

Home Health ICD-9/ICD-10 Alert

Reader Questions: Don't Start Off With Neoplasm Table

Question: When assigning diagnosis codes for patients with cancer, I often have difficulty finding the terms on the ICD-9 neoplasm table. How can I find the proper code for the cancer types I see described in the medical record?

-- South Carolina Subscriber

Answer: The Neoplasm Table in the alphabetical index is arranged by anatomical body part, not by morphology types. If the documentation provides the morphology, for example, adenoma or lymphosarcoma, then you should reference that term in the alphabetical index. That entry will provide further information so you know where to look in the Neoplasm Table.

Example: The documentation states that the patient has a myolipoma on the leg. You reference myolipoma in the alphabetical index. The term myolipoma indicates that this is a benign neoplasm of the connective tissue. With this information, you can go to the Neoplasm Table, reference "connective tissue," subterm "leg" and then look across to the benign column to find the code 215.3 (Other benign neoplasm of connective and other soft tissue; lower limb, including hip).