Home Health ICD-9/ICD-10 Alert

READER QUESTIONS: Gain Insight On Weighty Coding Issues

Question: What distinguishes "obesity" from "morbid obesity?" When is it appropriate to use these diagnosis codes?

Minnesota Subscriber

Answer: The codes for obesity depend on the Basal Metabolic Index or BMI. You can calculate the BMI by knowing the patient's weight and height. Overweight (278.02) would equal a BMI of 25-29.9. Obesity (278.00) is a BMI of 30 or greater. Morbid obesity (278.01) is a BMI of 40 or greater.

When reporting any of these codes, you should add a code from the V85.21-V85.4 (Body Mass Index) category to indicate the BMI. These BMI ranges are applicable to adults 20 or older.