

Home Health ICD-9/ICD-10 Alert

Reader Questions: Get Specific with Respiratory Infections

Question: What is the ICD-9 code for lower respiratory infection?

Answer: There is no "catchall" ICD-9 code to describe a lower respiratory infection.

What happens: When the physician evaluates the patient, he determines what part of the patient's respiratory system is affected by infection, such as the bronchial tree or the larynx. When the physician suspects a condition affecting the lungs or "lower respiratory system," such as pneumonia, he further identifies the condition by the use of x-ray.

Based on the physician's documentation describing the results of the x-ray, you should be able to identify the specific condition your patient has and then select the most accurate ICD-9 code (for example, 466.0, Acute bronchitis; or 481, Pneumococcal pneumonia). If the physician does not give the detail you need in order to choose a specific ICD-9 code, ask for more information.