Home Health ICD-9/ICD-10 Alert

Reader Questions: Strike Out Old Stroke Codes

Question: For a patient with diagnosis of cerebrovascular accident with hemiparesis (hemiplegia), do I code the CVA (436) and hemiparesis (438.20) or just the 438.20?

-- New York Subscriber

Answer: A code from the 438 category (Late effects of cerebrovascular disease) should be used for each late effect the patient has from a CVA.

Code 436 (Acute, but ill-defined, cerebrovascular disease) excludes CVA and hasn't been used for patients with a CVA since 2004. Home care coders shouldn't use the acute CVA codes (430-437) at all, except when completing M0190 and M0210.

With your patient, you should determine whether the hemiparesis is affecting his dominant or non-dominant side, rather than coding unspecified with a "0" in the fifth digit.