

Home Health ICD-9/ICD-10 Alert

READER QUESTIONS: Which Comes First With Cellulitis?

Question: Our patient recently returned home from the hospital where he was treated for cellulitis due to a leg injury. The cellulitis has tested positive for staph aureus. We are providing wound care for the cellulitis as well as two draining ulcers on the same leg. How should we code for him?

Vermont Subscriber

Answer: Cellulitis is an infection of the subcutaneous tissue. Ordinarily the bacteria gains entrance into the subcutaneous area via a wound. If the wound subsequently becomes infected, code the wound first and then list the cellulitis.

If there is no evidence of a wound, or if a wound results after the cellulitis, code for the cellulitis first.

The cellulitis code provides the instruction to use an additional code to specify the organism, so after the cellulitis list 041.11 to indicate staph aureus.

Unless otherwise indicated, reader questions were answered by **Lisa Selman-Holman, JD, BSN, RN, HCS-D, COS-C**, consultant and principal of **Selman-Holman & Associates** in Denton, TX.