

OASIS Alert

Reader Question: LEARN THE RULES FOR COMPLETING M1024

Our experts help with some of your most pressing questions.

Do you know where to turn when you need definitive answers for OASIS C and diagnosis coding?

You may be wondering: "I'm responsible to provide coding resources as well as OASIS information for our organization's agencies, but the more questions I get, the more frustrated and confusing the whole issue of coding is," says **Jan McLain**, with **Adventist Health System Home Care** in Port Charlotte, Fla.

"What sources of home health diagnosis coding information are authoritative -- the ones we must follow from a legal standpoint?" McLain asks the experts.

Experts advise: The official coding guidance comes from the cooperating parties, says **Ida Blevins**, supervisor of reimbursement & information management with **St. John's Hospital Home Health Services** in Springfield, Ill. The cooperating parties are composed of the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services**, the **National Center for Health Statistics** (NCHS), the **American Hospital Association** (AHA), and the **American Health Information Management Association** (AHIMA).

The rules for selecting primary and secondary ICD-9 diagnosis codes for home care must follow the Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting, developed by the cooperating parties and found in the front of your ICD-9 coding manual. Other official publications include:

- Coding Clinic for ICD-9-CM, published by the AHA, and
- The OASIS User Manual, Appendix D, published by CMS.

"Coding Clinic' is where you can send your coding questions to get official answers. This publication provides the official Q&A for ICD-9 diagnosis coding," says **Sparkle Sparks**, with Redmond, Wash.-based **OASIS Answers**.

Caution: Home care coders should take care to send only questions regarding coding guidelines and not about particular OASIS coding items such as M1024 to Coding Clinic, says **Lisa Selman-Holman**, consultant and principal of **Selman-Holman & Associates** and **CoDR -- Coding Done Right** in Denton, Texas. The folks at Coding Clinic do not deal with OASIS issues, she adds.

Resource: You can submit OASIS Cspecific questions for CMS to answer. Simply send your questions to CMSOASISquestions@oasisanswers.com.