

Modifier Coding Alert

Reader Question: Rely on Code Descriptors, Then Attach Modifier 50

Question: I have a physician who removed both the tube and ovary on one side and on the other side only removed the tube. In order for me to use modifier 50, do both bilateral procedures have to be identical?

Colorado Subscriber

Answer: The answer depends on the code descriptor. CPT® code 58661 (Laparoscopy, surgical; with removal of adnexal structures [partial or total oophorectomy and/or salpingectomy]) is for a complete or partial removal so your physician can do a complete on one side and partial on the other and still code with modifier 50 (Bilateral procedure).

Beware: Some payers don't require modifier 50. They think that because the descriptor of the code says "and/or," meaning all could be removed or only partial be removed, a modifier would not be necessary.