

Modifier Coding Alert

Reader Question: Surgical Team of Multiple Specialists Calls for 66

Question: Two doctors from our practice worked with other doctors as a team for a liver transplant. The team consisted of a general surgeon specializing in organ transplant, a gastrointestinal surgeon, a vascular surgeon, neurosurgeon, and a plastic surgeon to perform all the various portions of these procedures. Can I use modifier 66 on the procedures performed by both our doctors?

West Virginia Subscriber

Answer: You will use modifier 66 (Surgical team) on the liver transplant procedure (47135-47136, Liver allotransplantation ...) for each provider to tell the payer that the providers were part of a surgical team. The insurance pays each surgical team provider a specific amount instead of paying one provider the full amount for the procedure.

"Depending on what each provider does, will depend on whether the modifier is needed," says **Suzan Berman (Hauptman), MPM, CPC, CEMC, CEDC**, director of coding operations-HIM at Allegheny Health Network in Pittsburgh, Pa. "If one of the surgeons performs a procedure so that another surgeon can perform a totally different procedure, then the modifier wouldn't be needed by either surgeon. Each surgeon would bill for the procedure each one performed."

Tip: Your provider's documentation has to include a specific description of the procedure performed and include the fact that the provider was part of a surgical team in order for you to report with modifier 66 and you should consult with your payer