

## Pain Management Coding Alert

### ICD-10: Discover Wider Options for Neck Sprain and Strain Coding

**You won't rely on a single catch-all diagnosis after Oct. 1.**

Neck sprains and strains can be common complaints among your patients. While you're still coding with ICD-9, neck sprain and strain share a common code: 847.0 (Neck sprain) under category 847 (Sprains and strains of other and unspecified parts of back). However, this will change with the advent of ICD-10 when providers will have separate codes for sprain and strain of the neck region.

**ICD-10 options:** Under ICD-10, you'll code for neck sprain using the category code S13 (Dislocation and sprain of joints and ligaments at neck level). This code includes:

- Avulsion of joint or ligament at neck level
- Laceration of cartilage, joint or ligament at neck level
- Sprain of cartilage, joint or ligament at neck level
- Traumatic subluxation of joint or ligament at neck level
- Traumatic tear of joint or ligament at neck level.

You'll also have codes further on for other parts of the cervical regions such as:

- S13.4xx\_ : Sprain of ligaments cervical spine
- S13.5xx\_ : Sprain of thyroid region
- S13.8xx\_ : Sprain of joints and ligaments of unspecified parts of neck.

**Remember:** The digits after the decimal point in an ICD-10 code represent the subcategory code describing the site, etiology, manifestation, or state of the disease or condition.

When coding for a neck strain, however, you'll turn to a different code category instead. The correct choice with ICD-10 for neck strain will be S16.1 (Strain of muscle, fascia and tendon at neck level).

"Review current documentation to make sure you will be ready for ICD-10," advises **Doreen Boivin, CPC, CCA**, with Chiro Practice, Inc., in Saco, Maine.

For cervical region disorders such as neck sprain or strain, that means getting details from your provider about the exact anatomic region affected and whether the injury affects the joint, ligament, or both. With ICD-10 implementation coming so soon, start working with your physicians now to add these details to their documentation since you'll no longer have a catch-all diagnosis such as 847.0.

"There are webinars available that can help," Boivin adds. "Also, involve a staff member to help keep you on track with preparing and training."