

Chiropractic Coding & Compliance Alert

You Be the Coder: Will an X-Ray Older Than 12 Months Suffice for a Chronic Subluxation?

Question: There is a patient with an existing chronic subluxation with scoliosis for the past two years. The last X-ray was taken 18 months back and demonstrates subluxation. Will this X-ray suffice for a chiropractic claim?

Texas Subscriber

Answer: A chiropractor may choose to use an X-ray to demonstrate the subluxation. The X-ray should have been typically taken within 12 months prior or 3 months following the initiation of treatment. However, in cases such as these, an older record may be accepted if the patient's health record documents that the patient's condition has been there for longer than 12 months and there is convincing evidence that the condition is permanent. In such a case the previous CT or MRI may also be accepted if the subluxation of spine is demonstrated per Medicare guidelines. Check with your payer if they do not follow Medicare guidelines.