

Billing Education Article By Dr. Rhonda Church

ASK A MEDICAL CONSULTANT

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MSI has three physician consultants on staff who provide technical expertise to claims assessors. In addition, we sometimes reach out to a subject matter expert within a specialty area to assist with evaluating complex claims and answering questions from physicians and their billing clerks. Here are answers to some of the questions that have come our way in recent months.

Q. I am a billing clerk for a family physician. When the physician removes a lesion and we claim health service code 98.12W (excision of a lesion for suspected malignancy) can we also claim health service code 98.22 for suturing the wound?

A. Procedural codes remunerate physicians for all aspects of the defined technique for the procedure. In the case of health service code 98.12W, this includes both excising the lesion and suturing the wound. Therefore, you may not claim additionally for suturing following excision of a lesion.

Q. I am a paediatrician who attended the Billing Education Session in March and I have a follow-up question. If I am doing behavioural management (health service code 08.43A) do I claim this in addition to my consultation or visit fee, or as a stand-alone service?

A. Preamble rules permit you to claim for either one or the other, but not both, at the same service encounter.

Q. I am working in a clinic that provides services to veterans who have been assessed by Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) as having a VAC-insured disability. I spend a great deal of time assessing them and would like to bill MSI for this service as well.

A. MSI does not cover the cost of services that are insured by other parties such as VAC or WCB. Only one agency should be billed for these services. If the primary reason for the patient to attend your clinic is concerning the condition(s) related to the VAC-diagnosed disability, you may only bill VAC for this service. If the patient attends the clinic for a condition completely unrelated to the VAC disability, you may send a claim to MSI.

Q. How do I claim for a pre- and post-bronchodilator spirometry study?

A. There is no health service code for this study. An application should be made to the Fee Schedule Advisory Committee.

Q. I performed an urgent gastroscopy on a very ill patient in the late evening. May I claim a 35% premium for this service?

A. Yes, a Preamble change has added select endoscopy procedures to services eligible for a premium. These are listed in Appendix F to the Physician's Manual. Provided the code is on this list and you meet other Preamble requirements for claiming a premium, you may claim a 35% Premium for this service.

Q. Any chance you could meet with my group for a billing education session?

A. We are committed to working with physicians to assist with billing questions and provide billing education sessions. To date, we have provided sessions for family physicians and paediatricians, and have sessions planned for general surgery and palliative care physicians. We have had some preliminary discussions concerning an internal medicine session for later this year. In order to reach as many physicians as possible, we are rolling each of these out province-wide. In the meantime, we are here to help with your billing questions and may be reached by emailing MSI_Assessment@medavie.bluecross.ca.

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