

Billing Education Article By Dr. Rhonda Church

MSI RAMPS UP FOR FLU SHOT SEASON

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Nova Scotia will soon launch this year's influenza vaccination program. Besides being a busy time in primary care practices, it's a busy time of year at MSI as we field questions concerning claims submission for vaccines and related injections.

Provision of provincially funded immunizations, including influenza vaccine, is claimed using health service code (HSC) 13.59L. Modifiers are added specific to the type of vaccine being injected; for influenza the modifier is RO=INFL. This is a VADT or "visit allowed" procedure; if you provide a visit service to your patient at the same service encounter, you may also claim the visit. If you've incurred the cost of the associated supplies you may additionally claim tray fee HSC 13.59M. By way of contrast, injections of other substances, such as B12, are claimed as 13.59. These injections are VEDT "visit excluded" procedures meaning that you cannot additionally claim a visit. Tray fees are only payable with provincial immunizations.

These HSCs are for injectable vaccine only; administration of intranasal vaccines is not insured by MSI.

Here are some of the questions we've received concerning immunizations:

Q. I am a family physician who employs a nurse in my community based practice. May I claim for flu shots given by my nurse?

A. Yes, provided you are onsite you may claim for these. However, if the nurse is employed by another agency such as the Nova Scotia Health Authority or the IWK no claim may be made for the injections.

Q. I recently gave a patient two provincial immunizations. I expected to be paid 6 Units for each but was paid only 9 in total. Was there some mistake?

A. If multiple injections are given at the same encounter as an office visit, the office visit and the first injection are claimed at full fee; subsequent injections pay at 50%. If two vaccines are administered at the same encounter without a claim for an office visit, both will pay at full fee and the third and subsequent injections pay at 50%. Presumably, you additionally claimed an office visit and so you were paid 6U for the first injection and 3U for the second.

Q. May I claim for flu shots given by a co-located pharmacist?

A. Pharmacists receive payment for vaccines they administer and you may not additionally claim for them.

Q. My billing clerk thinks I should claim HSC 95.94A – injection of therapeutic substance into soft tissue – in addition to 13.59M and 13.59L. I'm worried about getting audited. Is she right?

A. The 13.59L code covers all technical aspects of your injection. Claims for additional HSCs related to that injection would not be appropriate and would result in an audit recovery.

Q. Is there anything else I should be aware of in case I am audited?

A. If the sole purpose of the patient's encounter with you was to receive an immunization, only the immunization (and the tray fee, if appropriate) may be claimed. In order to claim a visit, Preamble rules for a visit service must additionally be met.

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