

Title: Opposing Limits on Care Based Solely on ICD-10 Code Specificity

Introduced by: American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AAPM&R)

WHEREAS, ICD-10 code sets have increased specificity compared to ICD-9.

WHEREAS, insurers now regularly deny important clinical services for patients when physicians are unable to use specified diagnosis codes.

WHEREAS, adding specificity to certain diagnosis codes, such as those applied to brain injury, can be difficult and in some instances inappropriate, when elements of the patient's history are not known or are unknowable (such as an exact period of time for which the patient was unconscious).

WHEREAS, admission to Inpatient Rehabilitation Units has been denied due to use of ICD-10 code S06.2X (diffuse TBI, unspecified time) rather than ICD-10 codes S06.2X1 (diffuse TBI with loss of consciousness of 30 minutes or less), S06.2X2 (31-59 minutes), or S06.2X3 (1-5 hours), where the unspecified code was most appropriate due to lack of complete information.

WHEREAS, denials of care due to lack of specificity of diagnosis codes can place undue pressure on the physician to use an inaccurate or spurious diagnosis code.

WHEREAS, using an unspecified code in certain instances may fully meet or exceed the accepted standards of care, safety, and appropriate use, and

WHEREAS, the denial of payments based on the aforementioned technicalities of documentation does not support the quadruple aim to improve patient satisfaction, patient safety, value of care delivered, or physician job satisfaction, and

WHEREAS, there are likely many specialties experiencing the similar problem of denial of services based on inappropriate application of conventions for code specificity. Therefore, be it:

RESOLVED, that AMA oppose limitations in coverage for medical services based solely on diagnostic code specificity, **especially in cases when it would be less accurate or spurious to use an alternate diagnosis code. (Directive to Take Action)**

*The portion in red is what the AMA HOD removed.