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Laboratory Services

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When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.

ICD-10 Coding Impacts

Everyone who is covered by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act must now be using ICD-10 coding. If claims are not filed with ICD-10 codes they will be rejected. If you are using ChildLink, ICD-10 codes, will automatically be available. If you are still using manual requisitions, the ICD-10 code will need to be entered in the diagnosis code box.

Coding for Laboratory Tests

- A claim for a clinical diagnostic laboratory service must include a valid diagnosis or symptom.
- When a diagnosis has not been established by the physician, symptoms and signs should be provided.
- We are seeing an increase of insurance denials due to lack of diagnoses provided for all lab tests ordered. If there are 5 lab tests ordered, you should have typically more than one diagnosis or symptom listed for all the labs. If your patient is having multiple lab tests, one diagnosis can cover multiple tests, but not always. For example:
 - If you order a HgbA1C for your patient, then the diabetes diagnosis covers reason for test.
 - If you also order iron studies on the same patient, you will need another diagnosis or symptom such as fatigue.

Obesity ICD-10 Code Updates

On October 1, 2024, new codes became available for both adult and childhood obesity. The changes align with recommendations from American Academy of Pediatrics, as well as other leading professional societies. The goal of the new codes is to improve accuracy of obesity diagnoses, enhance treatment options, and reduce stigma associated with outdated terms.

What are the new codes?

For both adults and children, the new ICD-10-CM codes have been developed to classify obesity into three distinct categories based on severity:

- E66.811: Obesity Class 1 (Body Mass Index (BMI) ≥ 30.0 to less than 35.0)
- E66.812: Obesity Class 2 (BMI ≥ 35.0 to less than 40.0)
- E66.813: Obesity Class 3 (BMI ≥ 40.0)

For patients aged 18 and up, use these new codes together with the existing BMI Z-codes for adults with obesity to increase accuracy and available treatment options.

For pediatric patients (ages 2-18), the above codes are accompanied by a set of new Z-codes based on age- and gender-specific BMI percentiles. These include:

- Z68.54: BMI pediatric 95th percentile to less than 120% of the 95th percentile (Obesity Class 1)
- Z68.55: BMI pediatric 120% to less than 140% of the 95th percentile (Obesity Class 2)
- Z68.56: BMI pediatric 140% of the 95th percentile and above (Obesity Class 3)

These Z-codes will be used alongside the E66 codes to provide a more detailed picture of obesity severity in children and adolescents. Importantly, these new codes will replace older codes (e.g., E66.01, E66.09), ensuring that the new classification system is integrated into clinical practice moving forward.

Coding Tips:

- Use both an E66 code for the class of obesity with the appropriate BMI Z code.
- The BMI Z code cannot be used alone!
- Do not use BMI on patients aged 2 and under.
- Remember that the age of 18 is the cutoff for the pediatric BMI codes. For patients 18 and up, use the adult BMI codes.

Chart from “New ICD-10 Codes for the Diagnosis of Obesity”

| NEW E-Codes | Obesity Severity | BMI Range (kg/m ²) | Adult BMI Z-Codes | Adult BMI |
|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| E66.811 | Class 1 Obesity | 30 to less than 35 | Z68.25-Z68.39 | BMI 25-29.9 |
| E66.812 | Class 2 Obesity | 35 to less than 40 | Z68.30-Z68.39 | BMI 30.0-39.9 |
| E66.813 | Class 3 Obesity | 40 or greater | Z68.4 | BMI 40 or greater |

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| NEW E-Codes | + | Childhood Z-codes (Pediatric BMI) | Obesity Severity Category | Corresponding BMI Age- and Gender-specific Percentiles |
|-------------|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| E66.811 | | Z68.541 | Class 1 Obesity | 95th percentile to less than 120% of the 95th percentile. |
| E66.812 | | Z68.542 | Class 2 Obesity | Greater than or equal to 120% of the 95th percentile to less than 140% of the 95th percentile. |
| E66.813 | | Z68.543 | Class 3 Obesity | Greater than or equal to 140% of the 95th percentile. |

Sources:

Dietz, Dr. William H. “New ICD-10 Codes for the Diagnosis of Obesity. Stop Obesity Alliance: Milken Institute School of Public Health: The George Washington University, 8 Oct. 2024, stop.obesityalliance.org/publications/new-icd-10-codes-for-the-diagnosis-of-obesity.

“New ICD-10 Codes for Obesity Treatment: Advancements in Accurate Diagnosis and Care.” Obesity Medicine Association, 25 Sept. 2024, obesitymedicine.org/blog/new-icd-10-codes-for-obesity-treatment-advancements-in-accurate-diagnosis-and-care/.



Spotlight on Client Services:

Martie celebrated 2 years of working at Nationwide Children's Hospital in November! Before working at NCH, Martie has previously retired two times. Her first retirement

was from The Ohio State University Medical Center where she was a Tech in the Critical Care Lab. Her second retirement was from Laboratory Corporation of America where she worked in Client Services. Martie graduated from Columbus State Community College (CTI) with an Associate Degree of Applied Science in Medical Technology – MLT(ASCP). She enjoys going to the gym regularly, reading, and has recently started getting back into knitting. Martie also likes to go to the theater, musicals, and ballet. When asked for a brief tip for clients, Martie advised for clients to ensure that paper requisitions are filled out completely, including providing the office phone and fax number. This ensures we can reach out with any questions and that the results are returned in a timely manner.



Outdoor Temperatures and Lockbox Specimen Storage

It is imperative that samples placed in a lockbox outdoors prior to transport to the laboratory be maintained at the appropriate temperature, especially those days and evenings when outside temperatures dip below freezing, or soar during the day.



Outside temperature is above 46°F:

If refrigerated samples are stored in your lockbox, then one or two **refrigerated cold packs** should be placed in the lockbox to maintain the samples at the refrigerated

temperature until the courier picks them up. The gel pack should not be frozen, since you do not want refrigerated whole blood samples to freeze.

Note: Please be aware of your lockbox if it is sitting in the sun, or on concrete/asphalt walkways. The internal temperature of the lockbox may be warmer than the outside temperature.

Outside temperature is below 40°F:

If refrigerated samples are stored in your lockbox, a **room temperature gel pack** should be placed in the lockbox to prevent the samples from freezing while left outside. The gel pack should not be frozen, since you do not want refrigerated whole blood samples to freeze.

Many laboratory tests performed require adequate refrigeration of specimens. By following this lockbox practice, you will help insure the integrity of the samples and ultimately obtain reliable laboratory results.



Winter Holiday Courier Schedule

All scheduled courier pickups for Wednesdays, December, 25th and January 1st have been cancelled. Courier routes for both Tuesdays (12/24 & 12/31) and Thursdays (12/26 & 1/2) will run as regularly scheduled.

Our team loves helping customers like you!

Thank you for trusting us this year. We look forward to continuing to partner with you in the coming year!



Laboratory Account Representatives
Jessica, Larry, Stacy



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Lab Account Representatives are available via email to assist with any questions or concerns.

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