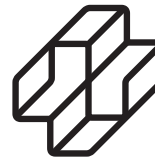


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Coding Q&A

By Jennifer Swindle

Q: What are the most appropriate codes to use when billing the medications associated with an implantable infusion pump refill?

One source has recommended that we bill individual J codes for each medication used (for example, J0735 for Clonidine and J0475 for Baclofen). Other sources suggest that J3490 (Not Otherwise Classified drug) should be used because the pain pump medications are considered compounded drugs.

A: As with many coding questions, the answer depends on the circumstances of the service and the specific billing requirements of Medicare administrative contractors, private insurers, and Medicaid programs.

In general, drugs with National Drug Code (NDC) numbers that are purchased and administered by a practitioner in their originally manufactured concentration and dosage should be billed

separately under their specific HCPCS J codes where specific codes exist. If no specific J code exists, J3490 may be billed. To enable the payer to price unspecified drugs, the drug name, concentration, and quantity administered should be documented on line level 2400 loop NTE segment of electronic claims, or Item 19 of the CMS-1500 paper claim form. Some payers may also require the NDC number, method of administration, number of days infusion, whether the source is a single- or multiple-use vial, and any wastage.

Drugs that have been diluted, mixed, or otherwise altered from the manufacturers' original formula by a pharmacy or in the office are considered compounded. They generally should be billed with J3490 with the NDC codes, quantity administered, and other information for each constituent drug documented.

However, when more than one drug is injected into an infusion pump, even in their original form, some

payers also consider this compounding because they mix in the reservoir. These payers may require you to bill J3490 with the NDC codes and other information on the component drugs.

Also note that some payers require that multiple drugs or compounded individual drugs administered through an implanted pump be coded J7799 (NOC drugs, other than inhalation drugs, administered through DME). Some payers require the J code modifier KD (drugs infused through a DME device), while others prohibit it. Different payers require different additional data elements, and many have very specific formatting requirements for submitting it. They may also require that drugs with different coverage rules, such as Baclofen and pain medications, be listed separately on bills. The best course may be to seek specific coding advice from payers.

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