Put Yourself Under the Microscope

A SELF-AUDIT ANSWERS QUESTIONS BEFORE THE REAL THING

By Allie Parnell, CPC, CPC-H

Due to increasing interest in ferreting out healthcare fraud and abuse, auditors are called upon to insure that what the insurance company is being billed for has the appropriate documentation to support the charges. To this end, auditors highly suggest that practices implement an internal review compliance program. Practices that don't implement compliance programs could be putting themselves at risk.

While the development of a formal compliance program is outside the scope of this article, I do want to call your attention to one aspect of such a program that is relatively easy to implement, educational for you and your colleagues, and potentially even remunerative. It is a self-audit of coding and documentation.

The purpose of an audit is to review the medical record to determine whether the medical record documentation could reasonably support the codes submitted to the insurance carrier. Per CPT, either the 1995 or 1997 guidelines can be used; however, the two cannot be used in combination.

The auditor will use a tool such as the following sample of a possible "Chart Review Form." If you can answer the questions first in a self audit, you can be sure you will have all the answers for the auditor.

Post-audit Follow-up

Shortly after the review session with the auditor, each provider should receive a summary report of the reviewer's overall findings. For example, the report might show that there were three instances in which a service was billed as 99212, but documentation would have supported 99213. The provider will also receive a copy of patient charts with the reviewers' comments.

A self-audit is not only a cost-effective way to protect against fraud and abuse; it's also a valuable educational tool for physicians to improve their coding and documentation skills.   ▲

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Fall O&M
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Friday, October 5, 2007 • Atlanta, Georgia
Tuesday, October 9. 2007 • Baltimore, Maryland
Thursday, October 11, 2007 • Chicago, Illinois

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October 18, 2007
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December 13, 2007
Webinar: Modifier Training