

Appendix A

Evaluation and Management Coding: A Foundational Study

If you are an HIM professional working in a physician practice, you are invited to participate in Susan Fenton's doctoral research examining whether different documentation and coding methods result in significant variation in E/M code assignment for professional services only. The purpose of this survey is to categorize physician practices according to their documentation and coding practices.

Please answer these questions for your office's E/M documentation and coding methods for calendar year 2005. It is understood that 100 percent of the physicians in your practice may not follow precisely the same methods. If greater than 75 percent in the practice use the same documentation and coding methods please answer according to their methods. If less than 75 percent, please select multiple methods. Answers are required for all questions, however, you can exit the survey at any time without penalty.

1. Describe the physician practice. (Circle the answer that applies.)
 - a. Multispecialty
 - b. Single specialty: _____ (specify specialty)

2. Number of physicians in the practice: Please answer only with the number of physicians (Circle your answer.)
 - a. Less than 10
 - b. 10-25
 - c. 25-50
 - d. 50-100
 - e. 100+

3. What type of organization is your practice?
 - a. Private physician group
 - b. HMO/managed care
 - c. Military/VA
 - d. Academic medical center
 - e. Part of for-profit integrated health delivery system (IHDS)
 - f. Not-for-profit IHDS
 - g. Other – please specify _____

4. What percentage of your patient population in 2005 was covered by Medicare (not Medicaid)?
 - a. Less than 10%
 - b. 11-25%
 - c. 26-50%
 - d. 51-75%
 - e. 76%+

5. Please indicate which E/M documentation guidelines were utilized in 2005.
 - a. 1995, please give reason
 - b. 1997, please give reason
 - c. Both. How do you decide when to use which version?

Reason: _____

6. How did the physicians in your practice document their regular office visits in 2005? (Please circle all that apply.)

- a. Handwrite in record
- b. Dictate for transcription
- c. Use hard-copy documentation template
- d. Computerized documentation template
- e. Free-form Electronic Health Record
- f. Other _____ (specify)

7. How were E/M codes assigned in your practice in 2005? (Please circle all that apply.)

- a. Clinician assigns from memory or using a "cheat sheet" or encounter form
- b. Coder assigns manually
- c. Coder assigns using an encoder
- d. Codes are suggested by EHR software
- e. Other, Explain: _____

8. Do you have any incentive programs for your physicians for coding? (Please circle all that apply.)

- a. Partnerships
- b. Pay-for-performance
- c. Bonuses for achieving revenue levels
- d. Other: _____

9. How was code validation performed in your practice in 2005? (Circle all that apply.)

- a. Contract company
- b. Coder/Manager in practice – manually
- c. Coder/Manager in practice with encoder
- d. Other: _____
- e. Did not perform code validation

10. How many coders does your practice employ? _____

11. How many coders in your practice are credentialed or certified?

- a. All
- b. Some, please give number: _____
- c. None

12. Do you have a formal, in-house educational process for your coders?

- a. Yes
- b. No

13. In 2005, was credentialing or certification an employment requirement for your coders, whether contract or employed?

- a. Yes
- b. No

14. Which credentials were acceptable or found in your practice? (Please circle all that apply.)

- a. RHIA and/or RHIT
- b. CCS
- c. CCS-P
- d. CCA
- e. CPC
- f. CMC (Certified Medical Coder)
- g. Other: _____

15. Have you changed your documentation and coding practices substantially, i.e., implementing an EHR or beginning a special physician documentation training program, during calendar year 2005?

- a. Yes (please explain)
- b. No

If yes, please give the reason, such as CMS audit, and give the approximate date of the change:

16. How would you improve your current documentation and coding method if you could?

- a. Make it template driven
- b. Implement a documentation improvement program
- c. Implement computer-assigned E/M codes with human validation
- d. Implement an EHR
- e. Begin using dictation
- f. Implement speech recognition
- g. Make the documentation and coding training mandatory for the physicians
- h. Other: _____

17. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the evaluation and management documentation and coding practices utilized in your physician practice?

18. What was your role in the physician practice in 2005?

- a. Coding and/or coding compliance only
- b. HIM, including coding and coding compliance
- c. HIM and Business Office, including coding and coding compliance
- d. Other: _____

19. Please provide the zip code of your main practice location in 2005. This will enable an analysis to determine if characteristics such as urban/rural status, age of population, etc., have an effect on documentation and coding method.

Zip Code of Primary Practice Location: _____

If you want to receive the summarized results or be notified of where they will be published, please provide your e-mail address: _____ (optional)

Thank you for your time. Please feel free to contact Susan Fenton at susan.fenton@ahima.org with any questions.