moda HEALTH

Manual:	Reimbursement Policy
Policy Title:	**Clinical Editing**
Section:	Administrative
Subsection:	None

Date of Origin:	1/22/2004	**Policy Number:**	RPM002
Last Updated:	1/13/2021	**Last Reviewed:**	1/13/2021

Scope

This policy applies to all Commercial medical plans, Medicare Advantage plans, and Oregon Medicaid/EOCCO plans. This policy applies to all provider types.

Reimbursement Guidelines

Moda Health uses HIPAA-compliant code editing software in the processing of medical claims to improve accuracy and efficiency in claims processing, payment, and reporting. Our clinical edit set focuses on correct coding methodologies and accurate, appropriate adjudication of claims.

Our claims editing software detects and documents coding errors on provider claims prior to payment by analyzing CPT, HCPCS, ICD-10, modifier, place of service, and revenue codes against correct coding guidelines. The software contains a comprehensive set of rules addressing coding inaccuracies such as: unbundling, frequency limitations, fragmentation, up-coding, duplication, invalid codes, mutually exclusive procedures, cross-provider unbundling or duplication, laterality inconsistencies, and other coding inconsistencies. Each rule is linked to a generally accepted coding principle.

The Moda Health clinical edit policies are based on coding conventions defined by a variety of established sources, including but not limited to:

- The American Medical Association's (AMA) CPT manual
- The AMA CPT Assistant newsletter articles
- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) policies, fee schedule status indicators, and guidelines
- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) National Correct Coding Initiative (CCI) and Associated Policies
- Coding guidelines developed by national professional specialty societies
- Specialty clinical practice guidelines
- Clinical research and practice pattern analysis

- Clinical experience of physician reviewers
- Numerous medical journals
- Medical texts
- Medical newsletters
- Coding industry newsletters
- Public health data studies
- Proprietary health data analysis
- Other general coding and claim payment references

Modifier Bypass of Edits

Some edits are eligible for a modifier bypass and other edits are not eligible for bypass. If an edit is eligible for a modifier bypass, it is preferable to append the modifier to the code which the edit would otherwise deny. If the same modifier is appended to both the allowed and the denied code, the clinical editing software applies additional logic and may still fire the edit. Only an appropriate and NCCI-associated modifier may be used to bypass the edit. To locate a current list of NCCI-associated modifiers, consult the most recent CMS NCCI Policy Manual, Chapter 1, § E, "Modifiers and Modifier Indicators." (CMS[10])

"Modifiers may be appended to HCPCS/CPT codes only if the clinical circumstances justify the use of the modifier. A modifier should not be appended to a HCPCS/CPT code solely to bypass an NCCI edit if the clinical circumstances do not justify its use." (CMS[11]) If the NCCI Policy Manual, modifier definition, or source guideline imposes restrictions on the use of a modifier, the modifier may only be used to bypass an edit if the restrictions and/or requirements are fulfilled and documented.

While code auditing software is a useful tool to ensure provider compliance with correct coding, it will not wholly evaluate all clinical patient scenarios. Moda Health may request medical records or other documentation to verify that all procedures and/or services billed are properly supported in accordance with correct coding guidelines.

Carrier-specific Edits, Policies, & Guidelines

Moda Health recognizes that there is no one-size-fits-all-carriers for clinical edits or reimbursement policy; each carrier has some carrier-specific policies and edits. We recommend that providers familiarize themselves with the locations of Moda Health's Reimbursement Policies and make note of our carrier-specific edits as they encounter them, as well as for each health plan with which they do business, and make best efforts to incorporate these into their regular workflow.

The American Medical Association's published guidelines address carrier-specific edits, policies, and reimbursement guidelines from commercial carriers and third-party payors:
> "Since each third-party payor may establish reporting guidelines that vary from coding guidelines, a clear understanding of CPT coding guidelines, as well as third-party payor reporting guidelines is essential." (AMA[3])

"CPT coding guidelines may differ from third-party payer guidelines. Eligibility for payment, as well as coverage policy, is determined by each individual insurer or third-party payer. For reimbursement or third-party payer policy issues, please contact your local third-party payer." (AMA[4])

The Medicare National Correct Coding Initiative Policy Manual specifically states:

"The National Correct Coding Initiative Policy Manual for Medicare Services and the edits were developed for the purpose of encouraging consistent and correct coding and reducing inappropriate payment. The edits and policies do not include all possible combinations of correct coding edits or types of unbundling that exist. Providers are obligated to code correctly even if edits do not exist to prevent use of an inappropriate code combination." (CMS[1])

"NCCI does not contain edits based on this rule because Medicare Carriers (A/B MACs processing practitioner service claims) have separate edits." (CMS[2])

"NCCI contains many, but not all, possible edits based on these principles." (CMS[2])

"The NCCI contains many, but not all, edits bundling laparoscopic procedures into open procedures. Since the number of possible code combinations bundling a laparoscopic procedure into an open procedure is much greater than the number of such edits in NCCI, the principle stated in this paragraph is applicable regardless of whether the selected code pair combination is included in the NCCI tables. A provider should not select laparoscopic and open HCPCS/CPT codes to report because the combination is not included in the NCCI tables." (CMS[5])

"The NCCI does not address issues related to HCPCS/CPT codes describing services that are excluded from Medicare coverage or are not otherwise recognized for payment under the Medicare program." (CMS[6])

"Providers are obligated to code correctly even if edits do not exist to prevent use of an inappropriate code combination." (CMS[8])

Moda Health's clinical editing system contains some edits which are not found on the NCCI edit tables, in the same manner as mentioned above regarding regional Medicare Carriers (A/B MACs) having separate edits. These edits are based upon correct coding guidelines and principles and have the same general purpose as the NCCI edits, to prevent inappropriate payment.

<u>Source/Rationale Information for an Individual Code-Specific Clinical Edit</u>

Upon request to Moda Health Customer Service, Moda Health will research and respond back to you within 30 days with the source that defines the policy standard for a specific clinical edit.

<u>Edits Applied to Specific Types of Providers</u>

Claims submitted on CMS1500 forms or the electronic equivalent are subject to professional clinical edits, CCI PTP edits, and MUE edits. Note: CMS applies professional practitioner PTP edits to Ambulatory Surgery Center (ASC) claims. (CMS[7])

Claims submitted on CMS1450/UB forms or the electronic equivalent with type of bill (TOB) 013x are subject to outpatient hospital CCI PTP and MUE edits.

- Critical Access Hospital (CAH) claims submitted with TOB 085x will be exempt from OPPS edits, status indicators, and rules.

- Rural Health Center (RHC) claims submitted with TOB 071x will be exempt from OPPS edits, status indicators, and rules.

- Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) claims submitted with TOB 077x (Noridian[13]) will be exempt from OPPS edits, status indicators, and rules.

Coding Guidelines

NCCI PTP edits utilized for practitioner claims are also utilized for Ambulatory Surgical Center claims. (CMS[7])

"In this [NCCI Policy] Manual many policies are described utilizing the term "physician". Unless indicated differently the usage of this term does not restrict the policies to physicians only but applies to all practitioners, hospitals, providers, or suppliers eligible to bill the relevant HCPCS/CPT codes… In some sections of this Manual, the term "physician" would not include some of these entities because specific rules do not apply to them. For example, Anesthesia Rules and Global Surgery Rules do not apply to hospitals." (CMS[9])

Codes, Terms, and Definitions

<u>Acronyms Defined</u>

Acronym		Definition
AMA	=	American Medical Association
ASC	=	Ambulatory Surgical Center
CCI	=	Correct Coding Initiative (see "NCCI")
CMS	=	Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
CPT	=	Current Procedural Terminology
HCPCS	=	Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS, often pronounced by its acronym as "hick picks")
HIPAA	=	Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

Acronym		Definition
MAC	=	Medicare Administrative Contractor
MUE	=	Medically Unlikely Edit (a type of NCCI edit)
NCCI	=	National Correct Coding Initiative (aka "CCI")
OPPS	=	Outpatient Prospective Payment System
PTP	=	Procedure To Procedure (a type of NCCI edit)
RPM	=	Reimbursement Policy Manual (e.g. in context of "RPM052" policy number, etc.)

Cross References

A. "Moda Health Reimbursement Policy Overview." Moda Health Reimbursement Policy Manual, RPM001.

B. "Modifiers 62 & 66 - Co-surgery (Two Surgeons) and Team Surgery (More Than Two Surgeons)." Moda Health Reimbursement Policy Manual, RPM035.

References & Resources

1. CMS. National Correct Coding Initiative Policy Manual. Introduction, pg. Intro-5.

2. CMS. *National Correct Coding Initiative Policy Manual*. Chapter 1 General Correct Coding Policies, § D, "Evaluation and Management (E&M) Services", pg. I-17.

3. American Medical Association. "A Closer Look at the Use of Surgical Modifiers." *CPT Assistant*, March 1996: 8.

4. American Medical Association. "Frequently Asked Questions." *CPT Assistant*, January 2016: 11.

5. CMS. National Correct Coding Initiative Policy Manual. Chapter 1 General Correct Coding Policies, § E.1.c), "Modifiers and Modifier Indicators, Modifier 58", pg. I-22.

6. CMS. National Correct Coding Initiative Policy Manual. Chapter 1 General Correct Coding Policies, § S, "Excluded Service," pg. I-35.

7. CMS. National Correct Coding Initiative Policy Manual. Introduction, pg. Intro-3.

8. CMS. National Correct Coding Initiative Policy Manual. Introduction, pg. Intro-5.

9. CMS. National Correct Coding Initiative Policy Manual. Introduction, pg. Intro-3.

10. CMS. National Correct Coding Initiative Policy Manual. Chapter 1 General Correct Coding Policies, § E, "Modifiers and Modifier Indicators", pg. I-19.

11. CMS. "How to Use the Medicare National Correct Coding Initiative (NCCI) Tools." Medicare Learning Network. January 2016: 6.

12. CMS. National Correct Coding Initiative Policy Manual. Introduction, pg. Intro-2.

13. Noridian. "Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) Billing Guide." Noridian Health Solutions. https://med.noridianmedicare.com/web/jea/provider-types/fqhc/fqhc-billing-guide . Last updated September 6, 2018; last accessed May 10, 2019.

IMPORTANT STATEMENT

The purpose of this Reimbursement Policy is to document Moda Health's payment guidelines for those services covered by a member's medical benefit plan. Healthcare providers (facilities, physicians and other professionals) are expected to exercise independent medical judgment in providing care to members. Moda Health Reimbursement Policy is not intended to impact care decisions or medical practice.

Providers are responsible for accurately, completely, and legibly documenting the services performed. Billed codes shall be fully supported in the medical record and/or office notes. Providers are expected to submit claims for services rendered using valid codes from HIPAA-approved code sets. Claims are to be coded appropriately according to industry standard coding guidelines (including but not limited to UB Editor, AMA, CPT, CPT Assistant, HCPCS, DRG guidelines, CMS' National Correct Coding Initiative [CCI] Policy Manual, CCI table edits and other CMS guidelines).

Benefit determinations will be based on the member's medical benefit plan. Should there be any conflicts between the Moda Health Reimbursement Policy and the member's medical benefit plan, the member's medical benefit plan will prevail. Fee determinations will be based on the applicable provider fee schedule, whether out of network or participating provider's agreement, and Moda Health Reimbursement Policy.

Policies may not be implemented identically on every claim due to variations in routing requirements, dates of processing, or other constraints; Moda Health strives to minimize these variations.

***** The most current version of our reimbursement policies can be found on our provider website. If you are using a printed or saved electronic version of this policy, please verify the information by going to https://www.modahealth.com/medical/policies_reimburse.shtml *****