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Shoulder doesn't have compartments...

More and more payers/carriers are denying extensive debridement of the shoulder code 29823, even though CMS removed the bundling edit for 29828, 29827 and 29824. It appears that payers/carriers are deciding they will define what an extensive debridement is vs. a limited.

In a physician's recent peer-to-peer they were told that the arthroscopic subacromial bursectomy and debridement of shoulder joint synovium along with a rotator cuff repair didn't support the reporting of 29823 with 29827. The reason given "subacromial space is in the same location as rotator cuff, which leaves just the synovial debridement supporting 29822." This is incorrect and not supported by CPT, CMS/CCI or AAOS.

You want to appeal and push back - AAOS stated in a meeting with CMS on May 5th, 2015 in which supporting documentation, imaging and video was provided showing and stating that the shoulder "is a complex anatomic structure comprised of three joints and two articulations; the glenohumeral, acromioclavicular and sternoclavicular joints and the subacromial and scapulothoracic bursae. All basic anatomy texts support the fact that the shoulder is divided into these joints and bursae." This May 2015 meeting was the starting point of getting CMS/CCI to unbundle 29823 with codes 29828, 29827 and 29824. In the meeting minutes it states:

“The Orthopaedic specialty societies and the AAOS corresponded with NCCI over a three-year period and had a conference call in May 2014 with both NCCI and CMS to discuss their concerns regarding the “one anatomic area” rule and the NCCI edits that followed. Unfortunately, the policy and edits have not been changed despite the considerable evidence to the contrary. In addition, the codes in question have not hit the RAW threshold for bundling at the RUC. They were paid, prior to 2010, under the endoscopic multiple procedure payment reduction policy. Therefore, there is neither medical or claims data evidence to support the NCCI rule.”

They went on to explain to CMS/NCCI using a video that “demonstrated that access to the joints and spaces of the shoulder are singular to the given structure and that access to different areas requires separate and distinct portals or incisions. The AAOS made the case that distinct services involving pathology in any area of the shoulder that have recognized ICD-9 and ICD-10 codes with corresponding CPT codes should be reportable for billing purposes.”

Dr. Hambrick, Medical Officer/HAPG attending as part of the CMS group, “noted that debridement codes in other parts of the body are not paid separately from the primary procedure. AAOS agreed and noted that debridement and synovectomy for visualization and access purposes are included in all arthroscopic CPT codes. AAOS contends, however, that where there is legitimate pathology and physician work, reporting services should be allowed.”

Bone Marrow Aspiration CPT Coding

As of Jan 1st, 2018, CPT Code 38220 is no longer available to be reported for the bone marrow aspiration from the iliac crest that many of the surgeons are using for surgical procedures other than spinal procedures. CPT states both in the CPT Manual and in the May 2018 CPT Assistant that for spinal procedures where they are harvesting bone marrow aspiration from a separate site code 20939 was developed and for all other surgical procedure it would fall under 20999. If you are getting denials for the 20999 as being inclusive, you maybe able to use this May 2018 CPT Assistant article in your appeal process as it states:

“Effective January 1, 2018, code 38220 is no longer reported for bone marrow aspiration to be used as a therapeutic autograft in conjunction with a spine procedure. Instead, new add-on code 20939 is now reported for this procedure, and it should be reported only in conjunction with the appropriate spinal code(s) from the subsections of Fracture/Dislocation (22319); Lateral Extracavitary Approach Arthrodesis (22532, 22533, 22534); Anterior

*Approach Arthrodesis (22548, 22551, 22552, 22554, 22556, 22558),
Posterior Approach Arthrodesis (22590, 22595, 22600, 22610, 22612);
Posterior Arthrodesis (22630, 22633, 22634), and Spine Deformity (22800,
22802, 22804, 22808, 22810, 22812), as noted in the parenthetical note
following code 20939. **Code 20999, Unlisted procedure, musculoskeletal
system, in general, should be reported for aspiration of bone marrow for the
purpose of bone grafting, other than spinal surgeries. In addition, codes
38205 and 38206 are reported for bone marrow harvesting for
transplantation, and code 0232T should be reported for bone marrow
aspiration for platelet-rich stem cell injection.***

Past and current newsletters can now be obtained at www.margievaught.com scroll to the bottom and click on past newsletters.

The newsletters will now start coming out quarterly and if there is 'breaking' updates that need to come out sooner, then special editions will be sent.

If you have issues or concerns that you would like further input on, please feel free to send emails to info@margievaught.com. If you would like to schedule any audios or live presentations, please feel free to contact me.

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Check out below for upcoming Audios and Live Presentations

Upcoming Audios and Workshops 2018

Sept 20th, 2018 – Audio –ICD-10 updates and reminders for 2019 for Orthopedic issues– sponsored by

<https://www.audioeducator.com/orthopedics/icd-10-for-orthopedics.html>

October 10th, 2018 – Audio –Arthroscopic procedures – Shoulders, Wrist, Hips, Knees and Ankles– sponsored by

<https://www.audioeducator.com/orthopedics/arthroscopy-coding-changes.html>

October 15th – 17th, 2018- 18th Annual Advanced Orthopedic Symposium – Hilton Orlando, FL - sponsored by DecisionHealth -

<http://www.codingbooks.com/specialty-coding>

October 30th, 2018 – Audio – Shoulder and Elbow Fractures – sponsored by DecisionHealth – www.codingbooks.com

November 5th – 7th, 2018- GAOE – Annual Conference – Omni Amelia Island Plantation in Amelia Island, Florida - <https://www.gaoe.org/annual-meeting.html>

Nov 29th, 2018 – Audio –2019 updates for Orthopedic Issues; Auditing Orthopedic specific EM services; Shoulder procedures - sponsored by www.audioeducator.com