



DIAGNOSTIC
LABORATORIES

Member
New York-Presbyterian Healthcare System
Affiliate: Weill Medical College of Cornell University

Dear Valued Client:

February 11, 2003

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of CPT coding changes for this calendar year. The AMA's CPT editorial panel has made many significant changes in the laboratory section of the *CPT 2003* codebook. The largest number of changes take place in the hematology and coagulation subsection. But in other subsections, several significant new codes have been added, and codes have been deleted or their descriptors revised. These changes may affect the way our laboratory bills Medicare, third party payers and other federal and state health care programs and may affect the amount of reimbursement we receive.

CODING CHANGES

Because the CPT coding changes are too numerous to treat in detail in this memo, we've summarized them below. It's important that you review the new CPT codebook as soon as possible for a complete listing of new and deleted codes, as well as descriptor revisions.

The changes for *CPT 2003* are:

- Organ or Disease Panels – ***TORCH panel (CPT code 80090) deleted;***
- Drug Testing – no changes;
- Therapeutic Drug Assays – no changes;
- Evocative/Suppression Testing – no changes;
- Consultations (Clinical Pathology) – no changes;
- Urinalysis – no changes;
- ***Chemistry – two codes added; (New: 83880 Natriuretic peptide; and 84302 sweat Na+)***
- ***Hematology and Coagulation – eight codes deleted, four codes added, nine code descriptor changes; (New: 85004 Blood count auto.diff.; 85032 Manual cell count; 85049 Platelet, automated; and 85380 Ultrasensitive evaluation for venous thromboembolism, qualitative or quantitative) (Deleted: 85021, 85022, 85023, 85024, 85031, 85585, 85590 and 85595)***
- Immunology – no changes;
- Transfusion Medicine – no changes;
- ***Microbiology – two codes deleted, three codes added, one code descriptor changed; (New: 87255 Organism identification; 87267 Enterovirus, direct fluorescent antibody (DFA); and 87271 Cytomegalovirus, (DFA).) (Deleted: 87198 and 87199)***
- Anatomic Pathology – no changes;
- ***Cytopathology – two codes deleted, two codes added; (New: 88174 Cytopathology, cervical or vaginal (any reporting system), collected in preservative fluid, automated thin layer preparation; screening by automated system, under physician supervision and 88175 with screening by automated system, under physician supervision.) (Deleted: 88144 and 88145)***
- Cytogenetic Studies – no changes;
- Surgical Pathology – no changes;
- Transcutaneous Procedures – no changes; and
- ***Other Procedures – one code added. (New: 89055 Leukocyte count, fecal)***

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO HEMATOLOGY

CPT 2003 made significant changes to the hematology and coagulation subsection. Several new codes have been added, several have been deleted, and the code descriptors have been changed for many others. You should review these changes carefully in order to fully understand how we will submit claims for these tests.

For example, you should review the code descriptor changes to CBCs carefully, since there have been significant changes to them (including codes describing manual and automated differentials) that will affect what tests are performed when a particular test is ordered.

Please refer to the *CPT 2003* codebook for a complete description of the changes.

DELETION OF TORCH PANEL

The TORCH panel has been eliminated. ***In order to get the test results formerly obtained from this panel, you must order each component test of the TORCH panel individually.***

MEDICAL NECESSITY REQUIREMENT

When you order any test affected by CPT coding changes, ***please remember that for this laboratory to bill Medicare and any other third party payer, the tests ordered must be medically necessary for the treatment or diagnosis of the particular patient being tested. You should also bear in mind that the medical necessity criteria of complete blood counts are now subject to a national coverage determination. We will be addressing the latter in a pending and imminent communication.***

NEW REQUISITION

In a few weeks you will receive copies of our laboratory's new requisition reflecting the CPT coding changes.

QUESTIONS?

If you should have any questions about these or any other coding changes, please do not hesitate to call me, or our Client Services Department. Our phone number is:

1-718-670-2574

Thomas J. Dobranski
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