

A Quick Reference Guide to Neonatal Coding and Documentation

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Section on Perinatal Pediatrics

Quick Reference Guide to Neonatal Coding and Documentation

Unlike many of the subspecialties in surgery and internal medicine, neonatology is relatively young. The first board examinations were given in 1975 and since that time the subspecialty, formally known as Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine (NPM), has proliferated. There are currently over 4,000 board-certified neonatologists in the pediatric workforce. The practice of NPM has evolved from the traditional university-based academic centers to various types of practice including academic, mixed academic/private practice to private practice, with employment models including self-employed, multi-specialty groups, corporate and hospital.

The scope of practice has also expanded from rendering intensive care services only, to include care for the entire birth cohort and well beyond the neonatal period. Many neonatologists now perform non-intensive care services. Changes in residency training have necessitated the integration of physician extenders such as hospitalists, advanced practice nurses and physician assistants to help provide care from the delivery room to the nursery. Practice activities may include clinical care, scholarship and research, administration and education. The models of neonatal practice vary with regard to the makeup of the care team, the employment of the neonatologists and the scope of practice.

Payment models in healthcare are continuing to evolve and change. Currently fee-for-service prevails but many pundits feel that capitation in one form or another is the future. Emerging technology and new therapeutic modalities have caused the process of coding for neonatal services to become more complex. Correct coding and documentation relies on the guidelines set forth by the coding system of the American Medical Association, called Physician's Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®), and the associated documentation guidelines published by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

The *Quick Reference Guide to Neonatal Coding and Documentation* was first published in 2009 to give the practicing neonatologist a comprehensive resource on coding practices that are unique to our specialty. The second edition of the *Quick Reference Guide to Neonatal Coding and Documentation*, again presented by the Coding Committee of the Section on Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine (SoNPM), expands upon the first edition, while broadening its appeal to caregivers in newborn nurseries and neonatal intensive care units (NICU), as well as those caregivers who perform follow up care for NICU graduates. The *Quick Reference Guide to Neonatal Coding and Documentation* is designed to educate health care providers to select the right code for the care provided. In addition, this quick reference guide will examine basic principles of coding and documentation, reference International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-10-CM) codes, discuss an overview of the Resource-Based Relative Value Scale, and present a multitude of coding case scenarios with referenced answers to assist the health care provider.

The SONMP coding trainers have authored this monograph and are available as an educational resource regarding neonatal coding practices. The coding process is complex and may be quite challenging. The general and specific principles discussed in this quick reference guide will serve as a reference to understand the codes that specifically apply to the newborn. The Coding Committee hopes that you, the practicing neonatologist or other healthcare provider caring for neonates, find this book a useful resource.

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