NCCI Bypass Modifiers

NCCI Procedure-to-Procedure (PTP) edits are code pair edits that prevent improper payment when certain codes are submitted together.

CMS defines modifiers that may be used under appropriate clinical circumstances to bypass certain NCCI PTP edits. Those modifiers are:
- Anatomic modifiers: E1-E4, FA, F1-F9, TA, T1-T9, LT, RT, LC, LD, RC, LM, RI
- Global surgery modifiers: 24, 25, 57, 58, 78, 79
- Other modifiers: 27, 59, 91, XE, XS, XP, XU

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 PTP edit if the clinical circumstances do not justify its use.
- Appending a modifier to a code indicates records are available for review that support the modifiers use.

It is important that NCCI PTP-associated modifiers only be used when appropriate. In general these circumstances relate to separate patient encounters, separate time units, separate anatomic sites or separate specimens.

Each NCCI PTP edit has an assigned modifier indicator.
- A modifier indicator of "0" indicates that NCCI-associated modifiers cannot be used to bypass the edit.
- A modifier indicator of "1" indicates that NCCI-associated modifiers may be used to bypass an edit under appropriate circumstances.

If a state Medicaid program imposes restrictions on the use of a modifier, the modifier may only be used to bypass an NCCI PTP edit if the Medicaid restrictions are fulfilled.

When clinically appropriate, an NCCI bypass modifier appended to the service that would have denied will result in a bypass of the PTP edit. For Medicare bundling edits, if both codes in the edit pair have the same modifier, the PTP edit is not bypassed. For Medicaid bundling edits, if both codes in the edit pair have the same anatomic modifier and neither code has modifier 58, 59, 78, 79, XE, XP, XS, or XU, the PTP edit is not bypassed.

Sources

CMS NCCI Policy Manuals:

https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Coding/NationalCorrectCodInitEd/index.html

https://www.medicaid.gov/Medicaid-CHIP-Program-Information/By-Topics/Data-and-Systems/National-Correct-Coding-Initiative.html

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