

The Codes They Are A Changin'...

With the start of a new year, a new set of CPT Codes was announced by the American Medical Association (AMA) and introduced through a series of workshops attended by more than 310 office managers and practice administrators. Each year, changes are implemented to the CPT Coding based upon the latest scientific and technological advances in medical, surgical and diagnostic services available to mainstream clinical practices. This year, the AMA has recommended 353 changes and include cognitive assessment and care planning, time-based care management, prolonged preventative services and anticoagulation management.

"While some years have many significant changes to the CPT codes, this year's modifications focused mostly in the cardiovascular area, especially in the endovascular repair of abdominal aorta and/or iliac arteries codes," said Jean Buble, R.N., C.P.C., Vice President of Case Management and HIM, RWJBarnabas Health. "Advancements in medical technologies will continue to drive future changes and help ensure accurate reporting and reimbursement of health care services."



Alyssa Ruby-Mako, Regional Director of Physician Relations welcomes attendees to the 2018 CPT Coding Program.

Specifically, some of the biggest improvements outlined for 2018 include:

Evaluation & Management:

- Revisions to hospital observation services, anticoagulation management, psychiatric collaborative care, general behavioral health integration care, critical care services and pediatric critical care patient transport codes.

Anesthesia:

- New codes have been added to anesthesia for upper gastrointestinal endoscopic procedures, lower intestinal endoscopic procedures, as well as, combined upper and lower gastrointestinal endoscopic procedures.

Cardiovascular System:

- The biggest changes in the cardiovascular system are in the endovascular repair of abdominal aorta and/or iliac arteries codes.

Radiology:

- The most substantial change to the radiology section is the addition of new codes and reporting instructions for various X-ray services.

Pathology & Laboratory:

- Changes related to molecular pathology, quantitative urine testing and specimen collection were made.

Medicine:

- A variety of changes in this section including new instructional parenthetical notes for catheterization and percutaneous transcatheter closure of paravalvular leak (cardiology), home INR monitoring (cardiology), measurements of minute ventilation and electrocardiographic recordings (pulmonary) and new codes to identify exercise testing



Jean Buble, R.N., C.P.C., Vice President of Case Management and HIM, RWJBarnabas Health reviews new 2018 CPT Codes.

for bronchospasm and to identify pulmonary stress testing.

Category III:

- New guidelines, parenthetical notes, and two new codes have been added for reporting transcatheter mitral valve implantation procedures in order to differentiate the types of approach, as well as, additional coding to report an online/electronic structured intensive program for prevention of diabetes.

In addition to this seminar and handouts provided by the Office Managers Association, supplementary resources are available to review the new CPT Codes. Buble referenced several books, as well as CPT Assistant, which can be accessed online for further guidance of the code changes. She also recommends keeping annual resources for at least seven years as part of the billing records to assist in validation, if needed.

OMA members have access to a wide variety of training opportunities on CPT Coding and more through the RWJBarnabas Health Office Managers Association. For presentation materials or more information on the CPT Coding Program, please visit www.rwjbh.org/OMA.

Ask the Practice Management Expert

"Ask The Experts" is a question-and-answer forum featuring leading practice management experts.

Q: What is cross training and what are its benefits to both the office and employee?

A: Cross training is the practice of training employees in different job positions and tasks. The benefit of cross-training employees is the ability to maximize efficiency while also allowing for individuals to grow by learning new skills.

Q: While cross training allows for improved performance and office strengthening, is there any potential downside, such as employee resentment or unhealthy competition?

A: While there may be a potential downside of cross-training employees, our office has been very fortunate to have only witnessed the benefits. There is great value in employees understanding that each position is appreciated, contributes to the greater good, and that no position is better than another. In addition, employees learn to respect each other more because they have a greater understanding of each other's roles. At the end of the day, the ultimate goal is to provide better customer service and communication to our patients and cross training greatly contributes to this objective.

Q: With multiple employees trained in a myriad of tasks, how do you avoid projects falling through the cracks?

A: Every employee has a job description to follow and tasks that ultimately are their responsibility. However, employees are trained to learn additional skills and are asked to contribute to areas that may be outside of their purview, when needed. Ongoing communication is essential to make sure no task has been overlooked or left undone.

Q: Does cross training assist with overall employee recruitment and/or retention?

A: I believe cross training employees adds value to each person's role and allows for employee growth within the practice.

Q: Does cross training play a role in office culture?

A: Cross training plays a pivotal role in office culture as it further emphasizes to our employees, and by extension our patients, the importance we place on working as a team.

Q: Has cross training ever led to the discovery of employees' hidden talents and/or aspirations?

A: Our front office employees gain valuable experience by working side by side with the doctors and/or nurses, which allows them to see if they want to further their careers in the medical field.

Q: Are there any financial benefits to the organization by cross training employees?

A: There are great financial benefits to the organization by cross training, as there are now several individuals who are able to perform a multitude of tasks, if needed. Knowing that we don't have to rely on just one person for a task allows for greater flexibility on best utilizing our resources before seeking external help.

Q: Are there any specific areas of operations where cross training makes the most sense?

A: We have found that cross training makes the most sense with our front office staff and medical assistants.

Our Expert

Analissa Watson
Office Manager,
Gynecologic Cancer
& Pelvic Surgery, LLC
West Orange, NJ



Analissa Watson knows what it takes for a medical practice to run smoothly having spent 26 years in the medical field. For the past 15 years, Analissa has served as office manager for Gynecologic Cancer & Pelvic Surgery overseeing a staff of 11. A long-standing member of the RWJBarnabas Health Office Managers Association, Analissa is also a member of Saint Barnabas Medical Center Office Manager Advisory Council and an advisory council member for Eastwick College. Analissa also gives back to her profession by serving as a mentor to Eastwick College students.

Are You Ready For An Emergency?

An emergency or crisis can be defined as a serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action and can affect your business in a myriad of ways. Workplace emergencies can range from equipment failure and power outages to employee theft and legal issues, as well as, natural disasters like hurricanes or fire to terrorism threats. As recent incidents have illustrated, the key to managing any situation is emergency management preparedness – both in written form and execution.

Kathleen Voldish, CLC (AMT), President of POC Consultants, LLC, has highlighted some components that should be

included in any written plan of action. Some factors to consider for your practice in an emergency include:

- Phone numbers of authorities that may need to be notified in an emergency.
- Communication plan that includes how personnel will be notified once emergency measures are initiated. How will you communicate with staff on other floors or employees who are due to arrive? Create a list of all staff phone numbers (regular, home and cell), as well as, email addresses and a point of contact for each person, if needed for notification.

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Are You Ready For An Emergency?

- A list of people who have keys to facility and alarm codes.
- Location of designated meeting place if the facility or area needs to be evacuated.
- List of supplies needed including battery operated radio, a NOAA weather battery operated radio, tools, duct tape, flashlights, candles, etc.
- List of information and equipment that is critical to the operation of the office. Are your medical files and/or patient charts in your computer backed up daily and stored in a location outside the facility? Who has the authorization to access those files outside the office?
- How fast can critical supplies be replaced? Make an inventory of necessary supplies and keep some outside of the facility.
- Is there an alternate address where you can work from if the office cannot be used (temporarily or permanently)?
- Are furniture and equipment secured?

"Although you may not want to think about workplace emergencies it is wise to address how your staff can respond if the unexpected happens," said Voldish. "Having a workplace emergency plan can minimize confusion and save lives. Planning ahead is the first step to a calmer, less stressful and more assured disaster response."

In addition to having a workable plan, physician offices should take steps to make sure the staff is adequately trained in the

event of an emergency. Some training that may be needed by some, if not all, members of staff may include:

- First Aid
- CPR
- Evacuation Procedures
- Facility Shutdown Protocols
- Crisis Communications Planning
- Fire Extinguisher Use
- Chemical and Biological Spill Control Procedures including use of eye wash or showers

Each office may have different emergency management plans based on their particular needs and it is up to each office to create a plan that best targets areas that they feel could be vulnerable. Once the plan has been drafted, employees should review the plan and give their input. When the final plan has been approved, make sure to educate personnel on the plan and their role in its execution. The plan should then be reviewed annually and updated accordingly.

The American Red Cross (www.redcross.org) and the Federal Management Agency (www.fema.gov) can provide additional resources when creating an initial plan. It is also wise to check with the office's insurance carrier to make certain any additional provisions, as it relates to coverage, is included in the written plan.

Voldish concluded, "No plan is foolproof until it is tested. It is hard to know how well the plan will work, however; thinking that disaster planning is not important is foolish!"

Corporate Corner

New OMA Portal As Part of Overall RWJBarnabas Health Website Redesign

Earlier this year, RWJBarnabas Health relaunched its website consolidating 24 existing and former RWJ and Barnabas Health web domains into a unified, online experience. As a result, the former Barnabas Health Office Managers website also underwent a redesign which resulted in a more integrated approach. The new OMA site can be accessed at www.rwjbh.org/oma.

Although the OMA website may have a new address and a new look, the overall content remains with even easier access to the most requested sections. These areas include:

- **Contact Us** – Direct link to RWJBH hospitals through its Physician Management team
- **Events** – Comprehensive listing of both OMA-specific and RWJBH events
- **How To Join** – Online membership form and criteria for joining
- **Member Login** – Additional proprietary information for OMA members
- **Newsletters** – Digital version of current newsletter as well as archive of previous issues dating back more than 10 years
- **Resources** – Links to pertinent government sites,

professional coding education and certification, professional organization for office practice managers and much more.

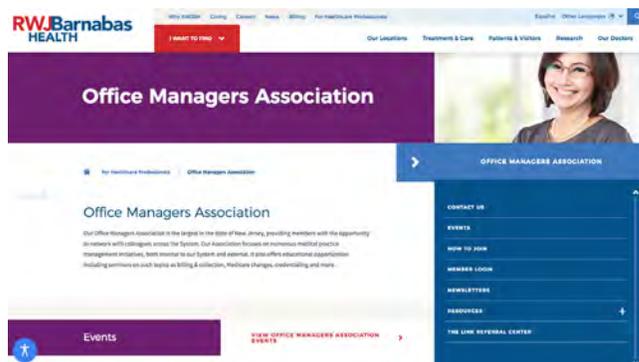
- **Physician Referral Center** – Access to information on RWJBarnabas Health programs, services, physicians and facilities in one area

Some of the new features of the redesigned RWJBarnabas

Health site include a languages/translate feature, accessibility options menu, interactive map, physician finder and a new "I Want To Find" feature which allows the user easier navigation to finding a doctor, scheduling an appointment, connecting to the patient portal, billing information and so much more.

"The new RWJBarnabas Health website, and especially the OMA portal, allows practice managers throughout our system easier access to relevant educational materials, training information, contacts,

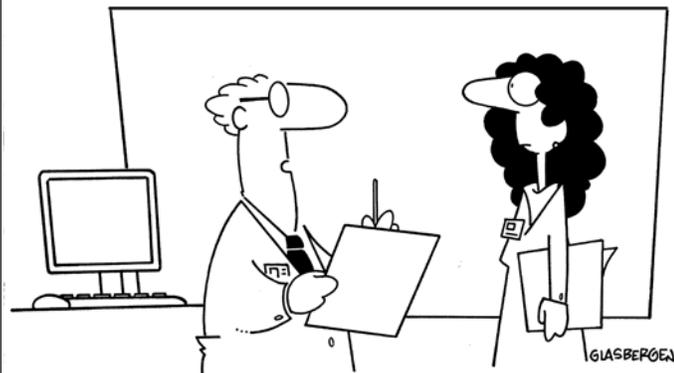
resources and much more," said Evelyn Meneghin, Assistant Vice President - Interactive Services, Strategic Marketing and Communications, RWJBarnabas Health who spearheaded the redesign process. "In addition to the goal of making the overall integration more culturally competent and local community connected for patients, we wanted the total user experience to be seamless as we continue to further integrate and enhance access to our services and physicians."



New OMA portal debuted as part of a redesigned RWJBarnabas Health website.

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“According to my research, laughter is the best medicine, giggling is good for mild infections, chuckling works for minor cuts and bruises, and snickering only makes things worse.”

Save the Date

Thursday, November 1
12th Annual Office Managers
Association Celebration
4 to 7 p.m.

New Location

APA Hotel Woodbridge
120 Wood Avenue South
Iselin, New Jersey

Cocktail/Networking Reception, including
RWJBarnabas Health Vendor Tables
4 to 5 p.m.

Dinner with Keynote Speaker
Entertainment • Raffle Prizes
5 to 7 p.m.

More details to follow!
We hope you can join us.