



Inhealth Professional Services Coding and Compliance Newsletter January / February 2021

DOCUMENTATION RULES FOR TOTAL ENCOUNTER DAY DOCUMENTATION - OUTPATIENT

TOTAL DAY TIME

Based on the AMA CPT Manual

For coding purposes, time for 99202-99215 is the total time on the date of the encounter. It includes both the face-to-face and non-face-to-face time personally spent by the physician and/or other qualified health care professional(s) - (NPs, PA, CNM) - on the day of the encounter (includes time in activities that require the physician or other qualified health care professional and does not include time in activities normally performed by clinical staff).

To select a code on total encounter daytime in the outpatient setting, document:

1. Your total day time (time spent on same calendar day you saw patient;

2. Sufficient information to support the time spent with regards to total patient care; and

3. Please review the following options listed in CPT:

Physician/other qualified health care professional time includes the following activities, when performed.

1. Preparing to see the patient
2. Obtaining and/or reviewing separately obtained history
3. Performing a medically appropriate examination and/or evaluation
4. Counseling and educating the patient/family/caregiver
5. Ordering medications, tests, or procedures
6. Referring and communicating with other healthcare professionals

7. Documenting clinical information in the electronic or other health care record
8. Independently interpreting results (not separately reported) and
9. Communicating results to the patient/family/caregiver

Per CPT, here are the time ranges for outpatient EM services:

New Patient:

99202 – total day time 15-29 minutes

99203 – total day time 30-44 minutes

99204 – total day time 45-59 minutes

99205 – total day time 60-74 minutes

Established Patient:

99212 – total day time 10-19 minutes

99213 – total day time 20-29 minutes

99214 – total day time 30-39 minutes

99215 – total day time 40-54 minutes

Example for 99215:

Total day time for patient was 50 minutes. That time was spent in discussing current health issues, DM management, hypoglycemia tx, myalgia and causes, hyperkalemia, review of labs with patient, reviewing plan of care and completing documentation in EHR.

You will notice, in the outpatient setting we no longer are required to indicate that more than 50% of our face-to-face time was spent in counseling.

Further Questions?

If you want to talk about the issue in this newsletter, or any other coding dilemma – reach out to us anytime:

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