

Blood Pressure Checks

Scenario:

In an office/clinic an established patient is being seen by his primary care physician for hypertension. The physician wants to monitor the new medication he has just prescribed. The physician documents "Next appointment: See nurse for blood pressure check and evaluation of the new medication." At the next visit the RN check's the blood pressure and how the patient is feeling on this new medication. The RN reports the results back to the physician.

Question:

Can this office visit be billed as a 99211 (Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of an established patient who may not require the presence of a physician. Usually, the presenting problems (s) are minimal).

Answer:

In this instance the correct answer would be "YES". The documentation supports the medical necessity of the service. An established patient was seen face to face where the physician provided "direct supervision" (physically present in the office suite where ancillary staff evaluates and/or treats the patient, and is immediately available to communicate with and direct the staff). CPT code 99211 should not be reported for the **stable** patient who decides to come in for a blood pressure check while in the area.

We encourage you to contact the Documentation and Coding Program staff: Janice at x4093, Pam at x7052, and Marcie at x2038 if you would like to discuss this scenario further, have questions, or would like to recommend another "quandary" you may have faced in the past. You may also email us at: compliance.officer@uchc.edu.