

Quandary

Susan works in an outpatient clinic of a hospital and is responsible for coding the evaluation and management ***facility*** fees for patients receiving services in the clinic. When assigning the facility fee code, Susan determines whether the patient is new or established based on the code selected by the physician for the ***professional*** evaluation and management fee. Is Susan correct?

Answer

Susan is **incorrect** in assuming that the criteria for determining whether a patient is new or established is the same for both the professional and the facility fee. The professional and facility fee have different criteria for determining whether the patient is new or established.

For the ***facility*** fee, the patient is considered a new patient if they have not been registered as an inpatient or outpatient of the hospital within the previous three years.

For the ***professional*** fee, the patient is considered a new patient if the patient has not received a face-to-face service from the physician or physician group practice within the previous three years.

It is possible that a patient might be new to the hospital for the facility fee yet established to the physician for the professional fee. As well, the patient may be established to the hospital for the facility fee but new to the physician for the professional fee.