

Will Highmark Medicare Services allow the use of a History of Present Illness (HPI) element more than once when scoring the History component of an E/M service?

According to the Evaluation and Management (E/M) Guidelines, the History of Present Illness (HPI) portion of the History component may be substantiated by documenting either the status of chronic conditions or the HPI elements. The guidelines are clear that in order to receive a brief HPI, a provider must document one to three elements of the HPI or one to two chronic conditions. The guidelines are also clear that in order to receive an extended HPI, a provider must document at least four elements of the HPI or the status of at least three chronic or inactive conditions.

The guidelines are not clear on how a provider's documentation is evaluated if that provider evaluates more than one acute or sub-acute condition during the same encounter and wishes to credit an extended HPI. If the provider evaluates more than one acute or sub-acute condition during the same encounter and elects to document the HPI elements, Highmark Medicare Services will allow an HPI element each time that element is documented when:

- 1) the service is reasonable and necessary; and
- 2) there are distinct problems documented with history elements that are reasonable to the evaluation and management of the patient's conditions.

If only one different element for each condition or multiples of the same element are documented for four different conditions, Highmark Medicare Services may not consider it reasonable and necessary to credit an extended HPI.

Posted Date: 05/13/08

Review Date: 05/13/08