
TITLE: 1995 Evaluation and Management Physical Exam Clarification

POLICY/PURPOSE:

Either the 1995 or 1997 version of CMS' *Documentation Guidelines for Evaluation and Management Services* may be utilized to determine the billable level for an E/M service. Where the 1997 guidelines are very specific, the 1995 guidelines are less so. Neither CMS nor First Coast Service Options, Inc. (our local Medicare Administrative Contractor) have provided additional guidance on the difference between an Expanded Problem Focused physical examination and a Detailed physical examination under the 1995 guidelines.

Other Medicare Administrative Contractors have published their interpretations on this issue. In order to remove confusion and improve consistency throughout the practice, the Office of Physician Billing Compliance, in concert with the Compliance Committee, has adopted Palmetto GBA's interpretation of the 1995 guidelines in regard to an Expanded Problem Focused and a Detailed exam.

DEFINITIONS:

Currently, the 1995 physical examination requirements are as follows:

- Expanded Problem Focused Exam: limited examination of the affected body area or organ system and other symptomatic or related organ system(s).
- Detailed exam: an extended examination of the affected body area(s) and other systematic or related organ system(s).

PROCEDURE:

Effective March 1, 2018, documentation for Expanded Problem Focused and Detailed level physical examinations under the 1995 guidelines will require the following:

1. Expanded Problem Focused: A limited examination of the affected body area or organ system and other symptomatic or related organ system(s). This means at least one affected body area or organ system must be documented and at least one other symptomatic or related body area or organ system must be documented. A single finding for each body area or organ system is sufficient.

The same finding may not be used to satisfy both a body area and an organ system.

2. Detailed exam: An extended examination of the affected body area(s) and other systematic or related organ system(s). At least 2 body areas or organ systems must be documented with “more detail.” More detail means at least two findings for 2 body areas or 2 findings on 2 organ systems.

The same finding may not be used to satisfy both a body area and an organ system.

Please note, no other aspects of the 1995 guidelines have been impacted by this change.

REFERENCES:

APPROVED BY:
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