



Connecticut State Medical Society - IPA, Inc.

Building Partnerships Between Business and Medicine

Corporate Office:
160 Saint Ronan Street
New Haven, CT 06511
Phone (203) 562-7228 • Fax (203) 624-6665

Operations Office:
4 Corporate Drive, Suite 185
Shelton, CT 06484
Phone (203) 225-1291 • Fax (203) 225-1295

New Patient Definition and Guidelines

Knowing when to bill new patient codes 99201 – 99205 can sometimes be confusing. It is important to understand that the need to create a new patient chart does not always in and of itself meet the requirement for use of a new patient E/M code.

If you can answer “no” to both of the following questions then you are well on your way to appropriately using one of the new patient E/M codes.

- Yes No Has this physician seen this patient for a face-to-face service in any setting, within the past three years?
- Yes No If you are in a group practice, has another physician of the **same specialty** who **belongs to your group practice** (billing under the same tax ID number) seen this patient for a **face to face service within the past three years?**

How does Medicare and CPT® define “new patient?”

Medicare definition of a “New Patient”: As defined by MCM Section 15502A – “Interpret the phrase *“new patient” to mean a patient who has not received any professional services from the physician within the previous 3 years.*” (*Section 15501H addresses physicians in a group practice)

“If no evaluation and management service is performed, the patient may continue to be treated as a new patient. For example if a professional component of a previous procedure is billed in a 3 year time period, e.g., a lab interpretation is billed and no evaluation and management service is performed then this patient remains a new patient for the initial visit. An interpretation of a diagnostic test, reading an x-ray or EKG ect., in the absence of an evaluation and management service does not affect the designation of a new patient.”

*As stated by MCM Section 15501H: **“Physicians in the same group practice who are in the same specialty must bill and be paid as though they were a single physician.”**

CPT definition of a “New Patient”: As defined in Evaluation and Management (E/M) Service Guidelines - - “Solely for the purposes of distinguishing between new and established patients, **professional services** are those face to face services rendered by a physician and reported by a specific CPT code(s). *A new patient is one who has not received any professional services from the physician or another physician of the same specialty who belongs to the same group practice, within the past three years.*”

“An established patient is one who has received professional services from the physician or another physician of the same specialty who belongs to the same group practice, within the past 3 years.”

“In the instance where a physician is on call for or covering for another physician, the patient’s encounter will be classified as it would have been by the physician who is not available.”