**Regulatory Committee insight: COVID-19 coding updates from the Coordination and Maintenance Committee meeting**

*by Howard Rodenberg, MD, MPH, CCDS*

The ICD-10-CM Coordination and Maintenance Committee met September 8-9 to consider revisions to ICD-10 code set. The ICD-10 Coordination and Maintenance Committee is a joint effort of CMS and the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). The semi-annual meetings review proposals to add, revise, or delete specific ICD-10-CM procedural and diagnostic code assignments. Changes may be proposed by CMS and NCHS staff, as well as by industry consultants, advocacy groups, and the public. Each meeting engages a wide spectrum of coding issues across all clinical service lines.

This month’s meeting highlighted several codes proposed to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. First, a new code is proposed for the diagnosis of pneumonia resulting from COVID-19 infection. At present, coding professionals must enter both a code for viral pneumonia and a separate code for the clinical presence of COVID-19 in order to describe pneumonia resulting from COVID-19 infection. The new code simplifies the process of clinical coding for these patients.

New codes are also proposed to describe the [Multiple Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) associated with COVID infection](https://acdis.org/resources/regulatory-committee-insight-covid-19-children%E2%80%94-cdi-team%E2%80%99s-effect); a more general code is suggested for MIS, as variants may be seen in adult.

Finally, a new series of Z codes are proposed to describe encounters for COVID-19 screening, personal history of COVID-19 infection, and personal history of contact and/or potential exposure to COVID-19. These COVID-19-related codes are proposed to be in place on January 1, 2021.

Codes relating to the COVID-19 pandemic were not the only things discussed. A sample of other subjects up for consideration included a revision of codes for depression, a proposal to greatly expand the code set for endometriosis based on the location and depth of organ involvement, establishing a code for acute flaccid myelitis (AFM), and developing a code set for moisture-associated skin damage (for example, skin damage from ostomy fluids). If approved, the majority of codes reviewed at this meeting will be effective October 1, 2021.

An important take-home lesson from this meeting (and the events of the past year), is that while the ICD-10-CM code set looks daunting, it’s support system is flexible and can move with great alacrity as the times demand. In the past year alone, we’ve seen rapid creation of codes for e-cigarette or vaping-associated lung injury (EVALI) and for COVID-19 infection. “Fast-tracking” additional codes to deal with further aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as introduction of a code for the increasingly noted AFM, are examples of how the system can move quickly to reflect the realities of the moment. Public comment is a critical part of that process.

The ACDIS Regulatory Committee encourages all members to review the current ICD-10-CM proposals and to engage in public comment. We would especially encourage your support of the new codes related to the COVID-19 pandemic as a means to better reflect our patient’s severity of illness and needs for care, as well as to best demonstrate the efforts of our health care provider colleagues during this difficult time. Public comments on these proposed codes must be received by October 9, 2020, and can be sent to: *nchsicd10CM@cdc.gov**.*

The ACDIS Regulatory Committee thanks you for your support of this initiative.

(Note: Full meeting materials are available online. The procedural code proposals can be viewed by [clicking here](https://www.cms.gov/files/document/september-2020-agenda-and-handouts.pdf). The diagnostic code proposals for this meeting can be found by [clicking here](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/icd/Topic-packet-September-8-9.2020.pdf).)

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