



UEI Coding Alert # 15

February 1, 2006

What Triggers a Coding Audit?

While a staff member may aid with coding, the doctor - who is accountable to the government and other payers - must review the codes for accuracy prior to submitting them for billing.

Watch for these red flags in your practice's coding habits:

- Within a group setting, the inconsistent coding among doctors.
- Excessive use of a code.
- Missing physician signatures for lab and/or test results ordered by a doctor, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner.
- Use of word such as "maybe", "perhaps", "probably", or "rule out" instead of signs and symptoms.
- Use of symbols or shorthand. (Be sure to keep a list of abbreviations that are commonly used in your practice. Negative symbols without elaboration are not considered sufficient documentation.)
- Lack of specificity about what you are reviewing. (Review of systems as unremarkable is insufficient data to support that a review was completed.)