

Cracking the Code for Therapy Goods and Services



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Abstract

Whether developing or rebutting a life care plan or performing a bill review, life care planners need to understand billing goods and services codes. Codes may change, so life care planners stay current in their understanding of the codes and utilization.

Introduction

When properly used, the medical codes in the life care plan will indicate who will be providing care (physician, therapist for example), the service planned as well as the level of complexity, why a procedure is needed, what equipment and or supplies will be used or provided and the type of facility where the service will be performed (inpatient or outpatient) (Maniha, 2008). This brief review will discuss Current

Procedural Terminology (CPT) and Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) codes for various therapies and provide resources for several national therapy-based associations.

These codes and coding tips should aid the life care planner who is including therapy services in the life care plan or when reviewing past medical bills. Using CPT and or HCPCS codes accurately will provide both transparency and reproducibility.

The AMA reviews, revises, deletes, and/or releases new CPT codes on January 1 each year. In 2020, for instance, there were 394 code changes in the 2020 CPT code set including 248 new codes, 71 deletions, and 75 revisions. These changes are usually announced in the Fall and can be found at <https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/cpt>.

Professional association websites, both national and individual state are useful ways to determine if there are changes to the specific codes or their current application to the specific therapy. See the list at the end of this article for specifics.

Origins and Usage

Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes were developed in 1966 by the American Medical Association (AMA) to standardize reporting for reimbursement of both services and procedures performed by healthcare providers. These five-digit alphanumeric codes are also used for both inpatient and outpatient facilities as well as providers (AAPC, 2020; CPT, 2020).

Beginning in 1978, the federal government created what is now the Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) system to standardize healthcare claims to the federal government. There are two divisions of HCPCS codes:

- Level I codes are the CPT codes
- Level II codes are for items such as durable medical equipment, disposable supplies, medications, and transportation services. Like CPT, HCPCS codes are also five-digit alphanumeric with the beginning letter (A–V) representing the grouping of like services and goods (AAPC, 2020; HCPCS, 2020).

Therapy services are billed with both CPT and HCPCS

codes. For example, the therapist would use a CPT code to indicate the services provided (e.g., gait training) and use a HCPCS codes for the provision (e.g., new crutches).

CPT codes for therapy services are either **timed** or **untimed**.

Timed codes indicate a therapy service provided directly to the patient; one-on-one, typically in 15-minute increments. These services include therapy modalities, procedures, and tests and measurements.

Codes for **untimed** services are used to indicate the number of times a procedure was performed regardless of the time spent, often once per day (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2020).

Associations & Therapy Codes

1. Acupuncture

a. Associations:

- i. American Academy of Medical Acupuncture (AAMA): <https://www.medicalacupuncture.org/>
- ii. American Society of Acupuncturists: <https://www.asacu.org>

b. Coding:

- i. Acupuncturists code for evaluation and management (E/M) services (99211–99214 and 99201–99204) and the provision of treatments (97810–97814). Acupuncturists also code for a variety of treatments and therapeutic modalities, as noted in the tables below.

c. Coding instructions:

- i. Office visits/E/M services may be billed on the initial patient evaluation and follow-up evaluations thereafter. Office visits are typically billed every 30 days or every sixth visit.

- ii. Acupuncture services are coded in 15-minute increments; one code for the initial 15 minutes then a separate code for additional units of time (Holistic Billing, 2020).

2. Art Therapy

a. Association:

- i. American Art Therapy Association: <https://arttherapy.org>

b. Coding:

- i. Art therapy uses HCPCS Level II code; G0176 (American Academy of Professional Coders; HCPCS & HCPCS codes; G-Codes, 2020).

3. Massage Therapy

a. Associations:

- i. American Massage Therapy Association: <https://www.amtamassage.org>
- ii. National Association of Nurse Massage Therapist: <http://www.nanmt.org>

b. Coding:

- i. Massage therapy is billed using CPT codes: 97122, 97124, 97140, and frequently, 97010.

c. Coding instruction:

- i. Do not combine 97124 and 97140; use one or the other (Massage Practice Builder, 2020).

4. Music Therapy

a. Association:

- i. America Music Therapy Association: <https://www.musictherapy.org>

b. Coding:

- i. The American Medical Association (AMA) CPT Editorial Panel recommends the use of Health Behavior Assessment and Intervention codes for music therapy: CPT 96156–97533 (American Music Therapy Association; CPT Codes, 2020).
- ii. Music therapy may be covered using HCPCS code G0176 (American Music Therapy Association; Reimbursement Overview, 2012).

5. Occupational Therapy

a. Association:

- i. American Occupational Therapy Association: <https://www.aota.org>

b. Coding:

- i. Occupational Therapy (OT) uses both CPT and HCPCS codes. CPT codes are used for evaluations (97165–97167); re-evaluations (97168); testing and measurement (95851 & 95852; 97750–97755); treatment procedures and modalities (97010–97763 & 29065–29445) and orthotic and prosthetic management and or training (CPT 97760–97763) (American Occupational Therapy Association; Billing and Coding, 2020).
- ii. Durable Medical Equipment (DME) HCPCS 'E' codes and definitions can be found at <https://hcpcs.codes/e-codes/?page=3>.

- iii. Casting supplies HCPCS 'Q' codes (Q4003–Q4040) and definitions can be found at <https://hcpcs.codes/q-codes/?page=1>

6. Orthotics and Prosthetics

a. Associations:

- i. The American Academy of Orthotists & Prosthetics: <https://www.oandp.org>
- ii. National Association for the Advancement of Orthotics and Prosthetics: <https://naaop.us>

b. Coding:

- i. Orthotics and Prosthetic (O&P) services are coded with CPT and HCPCS codes. CPT codes are used for the management and training of orthoses and prostheses (97760–97763). HCPCS 'L' codes are specific to the procedures and devices provided; codes and definitions can be found at <https://hcpcs.codes/l-codes/?page=1>

7. Physical Therapy

a. Association:

- i. American Physical Therapy Association: <https://www.apta.org>

b. Coding:

- i. As with OT, Physical Therapists (PT) code services using CPT codes: evaluations (97161–97163); re-evaluations (97164); testing and measurement (95851 & 95852; 97750–97755); treatment procedures and modalities (97010–97763) as well as orthotic and prosthetic management and or training (CPT 97760–97763) (WebPT, 2019).
- ii. HCPCS 'E' codes are specific to Durable Medical Equipment (DME); codes and definitions can be found at <https://hcpcs.codes/e-codes/?page=3>.
- iii. HCPCS 'K' codes are also specific to DME, particularly wheelchairs and component parts.

8. Psychology

a. Association:

- i. American Psychological Association: <https://www.apa.org>

b. Coding:

- i. Psychological services use CPT codes: evaluation (90791); psychotherapy (90832–90853) (American Psychological Association; 2016).

c. Coding tips:

- i. CPT 90785 is an add-on code to be used for interactive complexity. This code may be used with the psychiatric diagnostic evaluation (90791); psychotherapy (90832, 90834, 90837); and group psychotherapy (90853) (American Psychological Association; 2016).

9. Recreational Therapy

a. Association:

- i. American Therapeutic Recreation Association: <https://www.atra-online.com>

b. Coding:

- i. Recreational Therapy uses the HCPCS code, G0176.

10. Speech Therapy

a. Association:

- i. American Speech-Language-Hearing Association: <https://www.asha.org>

b. Coding:

- i. Speech Language Pathologists (SLP) use CPT and HCPCS codes. CPT codes include: swallowing function (92526–92617); speech, language, voice, and cognition (92507–97533; various codes listed below) as well as augmentative and alternative communication (92605–92609, 92618 and 92597).
- ii. HCPCS groups A, E, G, L, S, T, and V codes and definitions used for SLP services can be found at https://www.asha.org/practice/reimbursement/coding/hcpcs_slp/

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CPT & HCPCS CODES AND DEFINITIONS

These definitions were obtained from the 2020 AMA CPT code book

CPT Code	DEFINITION; BRIEF	THERAPY	CATEGORY
UNTIMED SERVICES			
20550	Injection(s); single tendon sheath or ligament, aponeurosis (plantar "fascia")	Acupuncture	Therapeutic procedure
20552	Injection(s); single or multiple trigger point(s), 1 or 2 muscle(s)	Acupuncture	Therapeutic procedure
29065	Application; shoulder to hand (long arm)	OT	Casting
29075	Application; elbow to finger (short arm)	OT	Casting
29085	Application; hand and lower forearm	OT	Casting
29086	Application; finger (contracture)	OT	Casting
29345	Application; long leg (thighs to toes)	OT	Casting
29355	Application; long leg cast (thigh to toes); walker or ambulatory	OT	Casting
29365	Application; cylinder cast (thigh to ankle)	OT	Casting
29405	Application; short leg cast (below knee to toes)	OT	Casting
29425	Application; short leg cast (below knee to toes); walking or ambulatory	OT	Casting
29445	Application; rigid total contact leg	OT	Casting
90791	Psychiatric diagnostic evaluation	Psychology	Evaluation
90845	Psychoanalysis	Psychology	Psychotherapy
90901	Biofeedback training	PT/OT	Modality
92507	Treatment of speech, language, voice, communication and/or auditory processing disorder	SLP	Therapeutic Procedure
92521	Evaluation of speech fluency	SLP	Evaluation
92522	Evaluation of speech sound production (articulation, phonological process, apraxia, dysarthria)	SLP	Evaluation
92523	Evaluation of speech sound production with evaluation of language comprehension and expression (receptive and expressive language)	SLP	Evaluation
92524	Behavioral and qualitative analysis of voice and resonance	SLP	Evaluation
92526	Treatment of swallowing dysfunction and/or oral function for feeding	SLP	Therapeutic Procedure
92606	Therapeutic service(s) for the use of non-speech-generating device, including programming and modification	SLP	Therapeutic Procedure
92609	Therapeutic services for the use of speech-generating device, including programming and modification	SLP	Therapeutic Procedure

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92610	Evaluation of oral and pharyngeal swallowing function	SLP	Evaluation
92611	Motion fluoroscopic evaluation of swallowing function	SLP	Modality
95851	Range of motion measurements and report; each extremity (excluding hand) or each trunk section (spine)	PT/OT	Tests & Measurements
95852	Range of motion measurements and report; hand, with or without comparison to normal side	PT/OT	Tests & Measurements
96110	Developmental screening (developmental milestone survey, speech and language delay screen) with scoring and documentation, per standardized instrument	SLP	Evaluation
96156	Health behavior assessment, or re-assessment	Music Therapy	Health Behavior
97010	Hot/Cold Packs	Acupuncture, Massage Therapy, PT/OT	Modality
97012	Traction, mechanical	PT/OT	Modality
97014	Electrical Stimulation (Unattended)	PT/OT	Modality
97018	Paraffin bath	PT/OT	Modality
97022	Whirlpool	PT/OT	Modality
97026	Application; infrared	Acupuncture, PT/OT	Modality
97028	Application; ultraviolet	PT/OT	Modality
97161	Physical Therapy evaluation - low complexity	PT	Evaluation
97162	Physical Therapy evaluation - moderate complexity	PT	Evaluation
97163	Physical Therapy evaluation - high complexity	PT	Evaluation
97164	Physical therapy re-evaluation	PT	Evaluation
97165	Occupational Therapy evaluation - low complexity;	OT	Evaluation
97166	Occupational Therapy evaluation - moderate complexity	OT	Evaluation
97167	Occupational Therapy evaluation - high complexity	OT	Evaluation
97168	Occupational Therapy re-evaluation	OT	Evaluation

TIMED SERVICES

90832	30 minutes with patient and/or family member	Psychology	Psychotherapy
90834	45 minutes with patient and/or family member	Psychology	Psychotherapy
90837	60 minutes with patient and/or family member	Psychology	Psychotherapy

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90846	Family without the patient; 50 minutes	Psychology	Psychotherapy
90847	Family with the patient; 50 minutes	Psychology	Psychotherapy
92605	Evaluation for prescription of non-speech-generating augmentative and alternative communication device; first hour	SLP	Evaluation
92607	Evaluation for prescription for speech generating augmentative and alternative communication device; first hour	SLP	Evaluation
92608	Add-on code to 92607; each additional 30 minutes	SLP	Evaluation
92618	Evaluation for prescription of non-speech-generating augmentative and alternative communication device, face-to-face with the patient; each additional 30 minutes	SLP	Evaluation
96105	Assessment of aphasia and cognitive performance testing; per hour	SLP	Evaluation
96112	Developmental test administration (including assessment of fine and/or gross motor, language, cognitive level, social, memory, and/or executive functions by standardized developmental instruments) with interpretation and report; first hour	OT	Evaluation
96113	Add-on to 96112: Each additional 30 minutes	OT	Evaluation
96125	Standardized cognitive performance testing per hour both face-to-face time and interpreting test results and preparing the report	OT, SLP	Evaluation
96158	Health Behavior Intervention, Individual; initial 30 minutes	Music Therapy	Health Behavior
96159	Add-on code to 96158; each additional 15 minutes	Music Therapy	Health Behavior
96167	Health Behavior Intervention, Family with patient; initial 30 minutes	Music Therapy	Health Behavior
96168	Add-on code to 96167; each additional 15 minutes	Music Therapy	Health Behavior
96170	Health Behavior Intervention, Family without patient; initial 30 minutes	Music Therapy	Health Behavior
96171	Add-on code to 96170; each additional 15 minutes	Music Therapy	Health Behavior
97032	Application; electrical stimulation (manual), each 15 minutes	PT/OT	Modality
97033	Iontophoresis, each 15 minutes	PT/OT	Modality
97035	Ultrasound, each 15 minutes	PT/OT	Modality
97110	Therapeutic exercises to develop strength and endurance, range of motion and flexibility; 15 minutes	Acupuncture, Music Therapy, PT/OT	Therapeutic Procedure
97112	Neuromuscular re-education of movement, balance, coordination kinesthetic sense, posture, and/or proprioception for sitting and/or standing activities; 15 minutes	Acupuncture, Music Therapy, PT/OT	Therapeutic Procedure

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97113	Aquatic therapy with therapeutic exercises; each 15 minutes	PT/OT	Therapeutic procedures
97116	Gait Training (includes stair climbing); 15 minutes	Music Therapy, PT/OT	Therapeutic Procedure
97124	Therapeutic Procedure including effleurage, petrissage and/or tapotement, compression, percussion; 15 minutes	Acupuncture, Massage Therapy, PT/OT	Therapeutic Procedure
97129	Focus on cognitive function (attention, memory, reasoning, executive function, problem solving, and/or pragmatic functioning) and compensatory strategies to manage the performance of an activity (managing time or schedules, initiating, organizing, and sequencing tasks); initial 15 minutes	Music Therapy, OT, SLP	Therapeutic Procedure
97130	Add-on code to 97129; each additional 15 minutes	Music Therapy, OT, SLP	Therapeutic Procedures
97140	Mobilization, manipulation, manual lymphatic drainage, manual traction; 15 minutes	Massage Therapy, PT/OT	Therapeutic Procedure
97530	Therapeutic activities, direct patient contact (use of dynamic activities to improve functional performance); each 15 minutes	Music Therapy, PT/OT	Therapeutic Procedure
97533	Enhance sensory processing and promote adaptive responses to environmental demands, direct patient contact; each 15 minutes	Music Therapy, PT/OT	Therapeutic Procedure
97535	Self-care/home management training, each 15 minutes	PT/OT	Therapeutic Procedure
97542	Wheelchair management (assessment, fitting, training), each 15 minutes	PT/OT	Evaluation and Therapeutic Procedure
97750	Physical performance test or measurement (musculoskeletal, functional capacity) with written report; each 15 minutes	PT/OT	Evaluation
97755	Assistive technology assessment (to restore, augment or compensate for existing function, optimize functional tasks and/or maximize environmental accessibility) with written report; each 15 minutes	SLP	Evaluation
97760	Orthotic(s) management and training (assessment and fitting), upper extremity(ies), lower extremity(ies) and/or trunk, initial orthotic(s) encounter; each 15 minutes	PT/OT/Orthotics	Evaluation and Therapeutic Procedure
97761	Prosthetic(s) training, upper and/or lower extremity(ies); initial encounter; each 15 minutes	Prosthetics	Evaluation and Therapeutic Procedure
97763	Orthotic(s)/prosthetic(s) management and/or training, upper extremity(ies), lower extremity(ies), and/or trunk, subsequent orthotic(s)/prosthetic(s) encounter; each 15 minutes	PT/OT/Orthotics & Prosthetics	Therapeutic Procedure
97810	Acupuncture without electrical stimulation, initial 15 minutes	Acupuncture	Therapeutic Procedure
97811	Add-on code to 97810; each additional 15 minutes	Acupuncture	Therapeutic Procedure

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97813	Acupuncture with electrical stimulation, initial 15 minutes	Acupuncture	Therapeutic Procedure
97814	Add-on code to 97813; each additional 15 minutes	Acupuncture	Therapeutic Procedure
99201	Office or outpatient evaluation and management (E/M) of a new patient: problem focused history and examination with straightforward medical decision making; 10 minutes	Acupuncture	Evaluation & Management
99204	Office or other outpatient visit for the E/M of a new patient with a comprehensive history and examination with moderate complexity medical decision making; 45 minutes	Acupuncture	Evaluation & Management
99212	Office or other outpatient visit for the E/M of an established patient with problem focused history and examination with straightforward medical decision making; 10 minutes	Acupuncture	Evaluation & Management
99213	Office or other outpatient visit for E/M of an established patient, which with an expanded problem focused history and examination and medical decision making of low complexity; 15 minutes	Acupuncture	Evaluation & Management
99214	Office or other outpatient visit for E/M of an established patient with a detailed history and examination. Medical decision making of moderate complexity; 25 minutes	Acupuncture	Evaluation & Management

Editor's Puzzle

And now for some fun: We all use different skills to do our assessments and different ways to calculate and present our data in tables. Here's a little puzzle to test your assessment and planning skills. First three people to send me the correct answer with their mailing addresses get a prize! Answer in the next issue! Send to whowland1@mac.com

Stay safe, get your vaccine as soon as you can, volunteer at a vaccination site, spread the word, not the virus. People trust us to do the right thing.

