

Payment Policy: Professional Services (Visit Codes) Billed With Labs

Reference Number: LA.PP.019

Effective Date: 08/2020

Last Review Date: 07/2025

[Coding Implications](#)

[Revision Log](#)

See [Important Reminder](#) at the end of this policy for important regulatory and legal information.

Policy Overview

Providers may receive reimbursement for visit codes (evaluation and management services) in addition to a laboratory test, but only when the provider performs a distinct and separately identifiable service in addition to the test. If a significant and separately identifiable evaluation and management service is provided to the patient in addition to the lab work, modifier -25 should be appended.

Application

This policy applies to Professional Claims.

Reimbursement

Providers should not bill an evaluation and management code unless a separately identifiable E/M service is provided. Billing an E/M code when the only service is obtaining specimens for laboratory procedures is inappropriate.

Modifier -25 should only be used to indicate that a “significant, separately identifiable evaluation and management service (*was provided*) by the same physician on the same day of the procedure or other service.”

To avoid incorrect denials, providers should assign all applicable diagnosis codes that indicate the need for additional E/M services.

Providers who do not adhere to the requirements above may be subject to a post payment medical record review and payment recoupment.

Documentation Requirements

The following guidelines will be used to determine whether or not modifier -25 was used appropriately. If any one of the following conditions is met then reimbursement for the E/M service is recommended.

- The E/M service is the first time the provider has seen the patient or evaluated a major condition
- A diagnosis on the claim indicates that a separate medical condition was treated in addition to the procedure that was performed
- The patient’s condition is worsening as evidenced by diagnostic procedures being performed on or around the date of services
- A provider bills supplies or equipment, on the same date, that are unrelated to the procedure performed but would have required an E/M services to determine the patient’s need

Coding and Modifier Information

This payment policy references Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®). CPT® is a registered trademark of the American Medical Association. All CPT® codes and descriptions are copyrighted 2024, American Medical Association. All rights reserved. CPT codes and CPT descriptions are from current manuals and those included herein are not intended to be all-inclusive and are included for informational purposes only. Codes referenced in this payment policy are for informational purposes only. Inclusion or exclusion of any codes does not guarantee coverage. Providers should reference the most up-to-date sources of professional coding guidance prior to the submission of claims for reimbursement of covered services.

CPT/HCPCS Code	Descriptor
99201-99205	Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of a new patient
99211-99215	Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of an established patient
99281-99285	Emergency Department Services
99288	Other Emergency Services
99291-99292	Critical Care Services
99241-99245	Office or other outpatient consultations

Modifier	Descriptor
-25	Significant, Separately Identifiable Evaluation and Management Service by the Same Physician or Other Qualified Health Care Professional on the Same Day of the Procedure or Other Service

References

1. *Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®)*, 2025
2. <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/2025nccimedicarepolicymanualcompletepdf.pdf>
3. <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/reporting-CPT-modifier-25.pdf>

Revision History	Revision Date	Approval Date	Effective Date
Converted corporate to local policy.	08/15/20		
Annual Review; Removed clinical and added payment policy in “Important Reminder” section	08/26/22		
Annual Review; update reference section	7/19/23	9/13/23	
Annual Review; remove the post payment validation section and added “Payments to providers are subject to post payment review and recovery of overpayments” remove statement “on or around the same date of service” to “on the same date of service” per AMA; updated dates and references.	8/19/24	11/20/24	12/20/24
Annual review; update references and dates	7/25	7/29/25	

Important Reminder

This payment policy has been developed by appropriately experienced and licensed health care professionals based on a review and consideration of currently available generally accepted standards of medical practice; peer-reviewed medical literature; government agency/program approval status; evidence-based guidelines and positions of leading national health professional organizations; views of physicians practicing in relevant clinical areas affected by this payment policy; and other available clinical information. LHCC makes no representations and accepts no liability with respect to the content of any external information used or relied upon in developing this payment policy. This payment policy is consistent with standards of medical practice current at the time that this payment policy was approved.

The purpose of this payment policy is to provide a guide to medical necessity, which is a component of the guidelines used to assist in making coverage decisions and administering benefits. It does not constitute a contract or guarantee regarding payment or results. Coverage decisions and the administration of benefits are subject to all terms, conditions, exclusions and limitations of the coverage documents (e.g., evidence of coverage, certificate of coverage, policy, contract of insurance, etc.), as well as to state and federal requirements and applicable LHCC administrative policies and procedures.

This payment policy is effective as of the date determined by LHCC. The date of posting may not be the effective date of this payment policy. This payment policy may be subject to applicable legal and regulatory requirements relating to provider notification. If there is a discrepancy between the effective date of this payment policy and any applicable legal or regulatory requirement, the requirements of law and regulation shall govern. LHCC retains the right to change, amend or withdraw this payment policy, and additional clinical policies may be developed and adopted as needed, at any time.

This payment policy does not constitute medical advice, medical treatment or medical care. It is not intended to dictate to providers how to practice medicine. Providers are expected to exercise professional medical judgment in providing the most appropriate care, and are solely responsible for the medical advice and treatment of members. This payment policy is not intended to

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recommend treatment for members. Members should consult with their treating physician in connection with diagnosis and treatment decisions.

Providers referred to in this payment policy are independent contractors who exercise independent judgment and over whom LHCC has no control or right of control. Providers are not agents or employees of LHCC.

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