

Clinical Documentation Improvement for ICD-10-CM & Procedure Coding

SAMPLE

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Contents

Section 1: Introduction	1
Origins of Clinical Documentation Improvement (CDI) Efforts	1
The Clinician’s View of CDI	2
Gain Share is Encouraging Documentation Improvement	2
Reasons to Implement Clinical Documentation Improvement	3
Hierarchical Condition Categories and CDI	4
Supporting Documentation for Reporting Procedures and Services	5
How Official Coding Guidelines Influence Documentation	6
How to Use This Book	8
Section 2: Clinical Documentation Improvement Processes—Best Practices	13
Assessment	13
Implementation	15
Query Program Sustainability	22
CDI Success Metrics	23
Using Technology for Clinical Documentation Improvement	23
CDI Brings Many Improvements	25
Section 3: Documentation Issues	27
Abnormal Auditory Perceptions and Acoustic (Auditory) Nerve Disorders	28
Abortion	32
Acute Myocardial Infarction (AMI)	37
Alcohol Abuse	46
Alcohol Dependence	49
Alcohol Use	52
Amyloidosis	55
Anemia — Acquired Hemolytic	58
Anemia — Iron-Deficiency	62
Anemia — Postoperative	64
Arthroscopies	66
Asthma	68
Atelectasis	72
Body Mass Index	74
Bronchoscopy	76
Cataract — Age-related (Senile)	78
Cataract — Complicated	80
Cataract — Removal of	83
Cellulitis and Acute Lymphangitis	85
Cerebrovascular Infarction and Hemorrhage	88
Chemotherapy Administration	94
Chronic Ischemic Heart Disease	101
Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)	104
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)	108
Chronic Pain	111
Colectomies and Enterectomies	114
Coma	116
Congenital Malformations of Great Arteries	119
Coumadin Toxicity	122
COVID-19	125
Critical Care Services	127

Crohn's Disease	128
Cutaneous Abscess, Furuncle, and Carbuncle	131
Cystoscopies, Urethrosopies and Cystourethrosopies	134
Debridement (Subcutaneous tissue, Muscle and/or Fascia, Bone)	136
Depression — Major	138
Diabetes Mellitus	141
Drug Dependence	148
Drug/Substance Abuse	152
Drug/Substance Use	156
Electrocardiogram	159
Embolectomy/Thrombectomy	162
EMG (Electromyography)	163
Emphysema	165
Encephalopathy	168
Endoscopy — Lower GI	172
Endoscopy — Upper GI	174
Epilepsy and Recurrent Seizures	176
Esophagitis	185
Facet Joint Injections	188
Fine Needle Aspiration (FNA)	191
Foodborne Intoxication and Infection	194
Fracture Care	197
Fracture of Femur	198
Fracture — Nontraumatic of Spine/Vertebra	201
Gastroenteritis (Viral, Bacterial, Protozoal)	205
Gastrointestinal Hemorrhage	209
Glaucoma	212
Hearing Loss	216
Heart Failure	221
Hematuria in Glomerular Disease	225
Hemorrhoids and Perianal Venous Thrombosis	231
Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Disease	233
Hypertension Complicating Childbirth, Pregnancy, and the Puerperium	236
Hypertensive Diseases	240
Hysterectomy	245
Influenza	249
Injections and Infusions (Non-chemotherapy)	253
Intracranial Injury	254
Intraoperative and Postprocedural Complications and Disorders of Ear and Mastoid Process	261
Intraoperative and Postprocedural Complications and Disorders of Genitourinary System	264
Malignant Neoplasm of Breast	268
Malignant Neoplasm of Liver and Intrahepatic Bile Ducts	271
Malignant Neoplasm of Unspecified Site	276
Malnutrition	279
Mastectomy	284
Migraine	286
Nerve Blocks	294
Nicotine Dependence (Cigarettes, Chewing Tobacco, Other Tobacco Product)	298
Obstetrical Package	301
Other Specified Disorders of Kidney and Ureter	304
Other Symptoms and Signs Involving Cognitive Functions and Awareness	307
Pacemakers and Implantable Defibrillators	310
Pneumonia	312

Preventive Services — Prostate Cancer Screening	316
Prostatectomy	317
Respiratory Distress of Newborn	319
Respiratory Failure	323
Rhythm and Conduction Disorders	329
Sepsis (Systemic, Generalized, Complication)	334
Shoulder Disorders	340
Skin Lesions — Removal of	344
Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)	347
Spinal Disc Disorders (Dorsopathies)	349
Transient Ischemic Attack	354
Trigger Point Injections	357
Ulcer — Non-pressure	358
Ulcer — Pressure	361
Ulcerative Colitis	364
Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)	367
Wound Exploration	369
Wound Repair	370

Section 4: Terminology Translator **373**

Appendix 1: Physician Query Samples **383**

Anemia Clarification	383
Chest Pain Clarification	384
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease	385
Confirmation Request for Pathology Findings	386
Debridement by Excision (Subcutaneous tissue, Muscle and/or Fascia, Bone)	387
Intracerebral Bleeding Clarification	388
Pneumonia Clarification	389
Pressure Ulcer Clarification	390
Respiratory Diagnosis Clarification	391

Appendix 2: HCC and QPP Associated Codes **393**

- To decrease the number of delayed or denied claims due to insufficient documentation
- To promote the goal of the hospital medical record being as complete as possible during an acute care admission
- To ensure appropriate reimbursement for the medically necessary services provided, regardless of the reimbursement mechanism

Hierarchical Condition Categories and CDI

As mentioned previously, CDI is important to ensure appropriate ICD-10-CM code assignment is supported. Clinical documentation is also important to support that Hierarchical Condition Category (HCC) assignment is correct, confirming correct code assignment and appropriate reimbursement.

Medicare is one of the world's largest health insurance programs, and about one-third of the beneficiaries on Medicare are enrolled in a Medicare Advantage (MA) private health care plan. Due to the great variance in the health status of Medicare beneficiaries, risk adjustment provides a means of adequately compensating those plans with large numbers of seriously ill patients while not overburdening other plans that have healthier individuals. Medicare Advantage plans have been using the Hierarchical Condition Category/risk adjustment model since 2004. Simplistically, based on the patient's condition and assignment of the correct ICD-10-CM code, the patient is classified to an HCC that has been determined to affect the cost of healthcare. Currently the following HCC models are in use:

- CMS-HCC (Medicare Advantage)
- Rx-HCC (Drugs)
- PACE/ESRD

The term "risk adjustment" is often used to describe what HCCs do. HCCs predict health care resource consumption of individuals. HCC scores are used to "risk adjust" payments to a health plan based on the level of risk the beneficiary presents to the plan. HCCs adjust payments so that there is a higher reimbursement for sicker patients.

Under the current CMS-HCC model, MA organizations collect risk adjustment (RA) data, including beneficiary diagnoses from hospital inpatient facilities, hospital outpatient facilities, and physicians during a data-collection period. MA organizations identify the diagnoses relevant to the CMS model and submit them to CMS. CMS categorizes the diagnoses into groups of clinically related diseases called HCCs and uses the HCC category, disease interactions, as well as demographic characteristics to calculate a Risk Adjustment Factor (RAF) score for each beneficiary. CMS then uses the RAF scores to adjust the monthly capitated payments to MA organizations for the next payment period.

Risk adjustment is a process of adjusting capitation payments to health plans either higher or lower to account for the differences in expected health costs of individuals. Risk adjustment is required for managed care programs that monitor changes in disease progression and population mix, set performance targets to generate outcome data, and identify patients for

Section 2: Clinical Documentation Improvement Processes—Best Practices

As mentioned earlier, the clinical documentation improvement process should be a collaborative one in order to be successful. The healthcare setting and whether the clinical conditions treated involve only a few, such as in a specialty clinic, or encompass the entire spectrum of diseases and disorders, such as in a full-service acute care hospital, will determine the scope and breadth of the program. However, there are many attributes that are commonly seen in successful programs of any size. Many physicians have found that participating in a CDI program at their local hospital also improves documentation in the office setting as well.

There are three main components to a successful clinical documentation improvement program: assessment, implementation, and sustainability.

Assessment

The first step in any CDI program must be an assessment. The assessment will identify those areas that are compliant as well as areas where improvement is needed.

There are several steps involved in performing the CDI assessment:

- Develop a CDI team
- Develop a review process
- Identify areas of risk
- Identify the root cause

Staffing

Before an assessment can take place, a clinical documentation improvement team must be established. This team should include members from all groups involved (e.g., clinicians, coders, information technology, etc.). Each team member can provide insight into what is needed for his or her particular responsibilities.

Staff members who will work on the CDI program can come from a variety of different backgrounds. Typically they include health information management (HIM) coding professionals, compliance officers, physicians, nursing staff, and other professionals with either a coding or clinical background. Some programs involve a variety of the above-mentioned individuals and job titles are not as important as specific attributes and skills, such as: clinical knowledge of the individual code sets and the reporting guidelines associated with that code set; understanding healthcare compliance as it relates to documentation, coding, and billing; and strong written and verbal communication skills. The importance of strong verbal skills cannot be overemphasized; these staff members will be communicating with physicians on a daily basis and must convey

Section 3: Documentation Issues

This section is organized in an easy-to-use alphabetic format according to the condition or procedure addressed.

For ICD-10-CM codes, the focus is on those diagnoses with significant differences in the type and specificity required for accurate code assignment. The Code Axes are listed, which may include the component subcategories or each code in the section to be discussed. Information related to the entire section of codes appears next, whether related to the ICD-10-CM classification itself or to the CDI process.

The CPT procedures included are those that have documentation issues as well as those for which multiple coding options are available.

Each topic includes clinical definitions that indicate differentiating factors that can affect code assignment. Clinical data such as physical examination findings, laboratory tests commonly ordered, and/or abnormal laboratory findings, ancillary testing provided, therapeutic procedures performed, common medications, and other significant information that may support reporting the condition may also be included. A Clinician Documentation Checklist that displays the clinical factors that the clinician should document is also provided.

In addition to the elements listed above, within each of the topics covered the following components may also appear:

Clinical Tip: Provides clinical definitions and information that will help classify the condition, service, or procedure to a particular code or ICD-10-CM subcategory.

Documentation Tip: Provides information regarding specific elements that are needed in the documentation to differentiate the condition or procedure from other similar conditions or procedures.

CPT Alert: Identifies information that may be found in the documentation that could possibly affect procedure code assignment.

CDI Alert: Contains helpful tips for the CDI professional or other staff member who may be reviewing the physician documentation. Suggestions for ensuring the most appropriate and complete documentation appear here.

I-10 Alert: Provides information that, when found in the clinical documentation, could affect ICD-10-CM code assignment.

Key Terms: Lists synonyms or other clinical terms that may be documented in the medical record that are also classified to the code.

Clinician Note: Shares tips related to documentation for the physician practice setting, which may impact professional component reimbursement and quality initiatives.

⇒ I-10 ALERT

The *ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting* provides useful information regarding documentation requirements, as well as reporting guidelines for the ICD-10-CM classification system. The official guidelines may be accessed at <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/fy-2023-icd-10-cm-coding-guidelines.pdf>.

CDI ALERT

Contains helpful tips for the CDI professional or other staff member who may be reviewing the physician documentation. Suggestions for ensuring the most appropriate and complete documentation appear here.

⇒ I-10 ALERT

Alerts the user to classification concepts unique to this code subcategory or code section along with assignment tips and/or differentiating factors. Instructions for additional coding requirements may also appear here.

 **CDI ALERT**

Ensure that the anemia is specified as chronic (and not acute posthemorrhagic) to assign codes from this category.

 **CDI ALERT**

Laboratory work-up typically reveals depleted iron stores and small, pale red blood cells (RBC), erythrocyte count less reduced than hemoglobin, serum ferritin below 12 ng/mL, low serum iron, and increased total iron-binding capacity. The physician must document the underlying cause of the anemia; no cause and effect may be assumed.

Anemia — Iron-Deficiency

Code Axes

Iron deficiency anemia secondary to blood loss (chronic)	D50.0
Other and unspecified iron deficiency anemias	D50.8, D50.9

Description of Condition

Iron deficiency anemia secondary to blood loss (chronic) (D50.0)

Iron deficiency anemia due to chronic blood loss most commonly results from a recurrent bleeding lesion in the gastrointestinal tract, such as a gastric ulcer or diverticulitis. Note that acute posthemorrhagic anemia is excluded from this category. The two conditions are clinically very dissimilar and have different causes.

Key Terms

Key terms found in the documentation may include:

Asiderotic anemia
 Chlorosis
 Chronic blood loss anemia
 Chronic posthemorrhagic anemia (D50.0)
 Hypoferric anemia
 Hypochromic or microcytic anemia
 IDA due to inadequate nutrition
 Idiopathic hypochromic anemia

Other and unspecified iron deficiency anemias (D50.8, D50.9)

These classifications are available when the documentation indicates conditions that either have no specific code assignment, or there is no specific documentation for the condition. Iron deficiency anemia secondary to inadequate dietary iron intake is indexed to code D50.8.

Key Terms

Key terms found in the documentation may include:

IDA due to inadequate nutrition
 Iron deficiency anemia due to inadequate dietary iron intake
 Refractory sideropenic anemia

Clinical Findings

Physical Examination

History and review of systems may include:

- Signs and symptoms
 - ◆ fatigue

- ◆ loss of stamina
- ◆ shortness of breath
- ◆ weakness and pallor

Diagnostic Procedures and Services

- Laboratory
 - ◆ CBC: low hemoglobin and hematocrit are below normal levels (In early stages, the hemoglobin may be normal.)
 - ◆ serum iron
 - ◆ total iron binding
 - ◆ iron saturation
 - ◆ serum ferritin
 - ◆ bone marrow evaluation
 - ◆ The World Health Organization (WHO) outlines anemia based on the following hemoglobin levels:
 - Men <13.0 g/dl
 - Women <12.0 g/dl
 - Pregnant women <11.0 g/dl

Note: In uncomplicated iron deficiency anemia the ferritin and serum iron levels are below normal while the TIBC may be elevated. Iron saturation results are either normal or low.

Therapeutic Procedures and Services

In most instances iron supplements are provided either in the oral or intramuscular method.

In severe cases a blood transfusion may be performed.

Medication List

- Carbonyl iron (Feosol)
- Ferrous sulfate (Feratab, Fer-Iron, Slow-FE)
- Iron sucrose (Venofer)

Clinician Documentation Checklist

Clinician documentation should indicate the following:

- Type of iron deficient anemia
 - ◆ secondary to blood loss
 - ◆ due to inadequate dietary iron intake
 - ◆ due to inadequate nutrition
 - ◆ asiderotic
 - ◆ chlorosis
 - ◆ hypoferric
 - ◆ idiopathic hypochromic
 - ◆ refractory sideropenic
 - ◆ acute, chronic, acute on chronic

Epilepsy and Recurrent Seizures

Code Axes

Localization-related (focal) (partial) idiopathic epilepsy and epileptic syndromes with seizures of localized onset	G40.0- HCC
Localization-related (focal) (partial) symptomatic epilepsy and epileptic syndromes with simple partial seizures	G40.1- HCC
Localization-related (focal) (partial) symptomatic epilepsy and epileptic syndromes with complex partial seizures	G40.2- HCC
Generalized idiopathic epilepsy and epileptic syndromes	G40.3- HCC
Absence epileptic syndrome	G40.A- HCC
Juvenile myoclonic epilepsy (impulsive petit mal)	G40.B- HCC
Other generalized epilepsy and epileptic syndromes	G40.4- HCC
Epileptic seizures related to external causes	G40.5- HCC
Other epilepsy and recurrent seizures	G40.8- HCC
Epilepsy, unspecified	G40.9- HCC

Clinical Tip

The following definitions should be used for all subclassifications related to epilepsy and epileptic syndromes:

Status epilepticus: Typically defined as one continuous, unremitting seizure lasting longer than 30 minutes, or recurrent seizures without regaining consciousness between seizures for greater than 30 minutes. The condition is always considered a medical emergency.

Intractable epilepsy: There is not a universal definition for this complication, but it appears that most agree that a definition of drug-resistant epilepsy is a failure of adequate trials of two tolerated and appropriately chosen and used antiepileptic drug (AED) schedules.

Key Terms

Key terms found in the documentation for intractable epilepsy may include:

- Pharmacoresistant (pharmacologically resistant) epilepsy
- Poorly controlled epilepsy
- Refractory (medically) epilepsy
- Treatment resistant epilepsy

⇒ I-10 ALERT

There is an additional classification axis for the presence of status epilepticus. Sixth characters are found throughout the subcategory representing this condition.

👁️ CDI ALERT

Ensure that not only is the type of epilepsy or recurrent seizure documented, but that the details related to status epilepticus and intractable epilepsy are also present in the medical record.

**CDI ALERT**

Migraine as adverse effect of medication: documentation must link the nature of the adverse effect as the type of migraine and state the drug or classification, when known.

**I-10 ALERT**

Not all subcategories include codes that relate the presence of status migrainosus but all subcategories do include codes that relate the presence of intractability. Ensure that both of these are clearly documented in the medical record, when applicable.

Migraine

Code Axes

Migraine without aura	G43.0-
Migraine with aura	G43.1-
Hemiplegic migraine	G43.4-
Persistent migraine aura without cerebral infarction	G43.5-
Persistent migraine aura with cerebral infarction	G43.6-
Chronic migraine without aura	G43.7-
Cyclical vomiting in migraine	G43.A-
Ophthalmoplegic migraine	G43.B-
Periodic headache syndromes in child or adult	G43.C-
Abdominal migraine	G43.D-
Other migraine	G43.8-
Migraine, unspecified	G43.9-

Clinical Tip

Migraine is defined as a moderate to severe headache that is intermittent, lasts four to 72 hours, and is throbbing in quality. Some patients experience nausea and become sensitive to lights and noise, in association with the headache. Migraine mechanisms are believed to involve chemical substances such as serotonin, increased stickiness of blood platelets, alterations in cerebral blood flow, and increased irritability of the nerve cells in the brain.

The following definitions should be used for all subclassifications related to migraine:

Intractable migraine: Sustained and severe migraine headaches, along with their manifestations, that are not adequately controlled by standard outpatient treatments. Other terms may include: pharmacoresistant, pharmacologically resistant, treatment resistant, medically refractory, or poorly controlled.

Status migrainosus: A debilitating migraine headache lasting more than 72 hours.

Migraine with aura: A less common type of migraine that includes symptoms or feelings that occur immediately preceding a migraine headache. The symptoms are also called a prodrome, which may last for five to 20 minutes, or may continue with the headache. Some of the most common prodromes include the following:

- Blind spots or scotomas
- Weakness
- Hallucinations
- Blindness in half of the visual field in one or both eyes (hemianopsia)

- Seeing zigzag patterns (fortification)
- Seeing flashing lights (scintilla)
- Feeling prickling skin (paresthesia)

Description of Condition

Migraine without and with aura (G43.0-, G43.1-)

Clinical Tip

Migraine is defined as a moderate to severe headache that it is intermittent, lasts four to 72 hours, and is throbbing in quality. Some patients experience nausea and become sensitive to lights and noise, in association with the headache. Migraine mechanisms are believed to involve chemical substances such as serotonin, increased stickiness of blood platelets, alterations in cerebral blood flow and increased irritability of the nerve cells in the brain. A migraine with aura is a less common type of migraine that includes symptoms or feelings that occur immediately preceding a migraine headache. The symptoms are also called a prodrome, which may last for five to 20 minutes, or may continue with the headache.

Key Terms

Key terms found in the documentation may include:

Basilar migraine
 Classical migraine
 Common migraine
 Migraine equivalents
 Migraine preceded or accompanied by transient focal neurological phenomena
 Migraine triggered seizures
 Migraine with acute-onset aura
 Migraine with aura without headache (migraine equivalents)
 Migraine with prolonged aura
 Migraine with typical aura
 Retinal migraine
 Without aura

Clinician Note

Ensure that all related conditions are coded appropriately, particularly if seizure activity is documented.



CDI ALERT

Ensure that not only are conditions related to intractability and status migrainosus clearly documented, but if any associated seizure activity is present, it should be documented and classified separately.

Appendix 1: Physician Query Samples

The major purpose of queries is to obtain clarification when documentation in the health record impacts an externally reportable data element and is illegible, incomplete, unclear, inconsistent, or imprecise. As noted earlier in this manual, queries should not lead the provider to a specific diagnosis or response; introduce new information not documented elsewhere; reference directly or indirectly any financial, severity of illness, or risk of mortality impact of the query response; or appear to question a provider's clinical judgment.

The query examples that follow here are intended to provide those actively working with physicians in clinical documentation improvement activities, to encourage accurate and appropriate documentation.

Anemia Clarification

Dr. Davis:

This patient was admitted with a duodenal bleed per your admission note. At that time, her hemoglobin was 7.4gm/dl and her hematocrit was 22.6 percent. The H&P states "anemia." After admission, the patient was treated with two units packed red blood cells (PRBC).

Can your diagnosis of anemia be further specified to any of the following?:

Acute blood loss anemia: _____

Chronic blood loss anemia: _____

Other type of anemia: _____

Unable to determine: _____

Please document any clarification in the progress notes or on the discharge summary.

Signature _____

Date _____

Thank you,

John Jay

Appendix 2: HCC and QPP Associated Codes

The following lists include the number and official description of the HCC or QPP measures referenced in the table below. To save space the official descriptions have been provided once in this list. The table includes CPT codes, ICD-10-CM codes, and any applicable HCC and/or QPP measures for **topics covered in this book**. Note that to save space, some ICD-10-CM codes ranges are listed within certain topics in the body of this book. The individual code should be verified in this table.

CMS-HCC Model Category

- 1 HIV/AIDS
- 2 Septicemia, Sepsis, Systemic Inflammatory Response Syndrome/Shock
- 6 Opportunistic Infections
- 8 Metastatic Cancer and Acute Leukemia
- 9 Lung and Other Severe Cancers
- 10 Lymphoma and Other Cancers
- 11 Colorectal, Bladder, and Other Cancers
- 12 Breast, Prostate, and Other Cancers and Tumors
- 17 Diabetes with Acute Complications
- 18 Diabetes with Chronic Complications
- 19 Diabetes without Complication
- 21 Protein-Calorie Malnutrition
- 22 Morbid Obesity
- 23 Other Significant Endocrine and Metabolic Disorders
- 27 End-Stage Liver Disease
- 28 Cirrhosis of Liver
- 29 Chronic Hepatitis
- 33 Intestinal Obstruction/Perforation
- 34 Chronic Pancreatitis
- 35 Inflammatory Bowel Disease
- 39 Bone/Joint/Muscle Infections/Necrosis
- 40 Rheumatoid Arthritis and Inflammatory Connective Tissue Disease
- 46 Severe Hematological Disorders
- 47 Disorders of Immunity
- 48 Coagulation Defects and Other Specified Hematological Disorders
- 51 Dementia With Complications
- 52 Dementia Without Complications
- 54 Substance Use with Psychotic Complications
- 55 Substance Use Disorder, Moderate/Severe, or Substance Use with Complications
- 56 Substance Use Disorder, Mild, Except Alcohol and Cannabis
- 57 Schizophrenia
- 58 Reactive and Unspecified Psychosis
- 59 Major Depressive, Bipolar, and Paranoid Disorders
- 60 Personality Disorders
- 70 Quadriplegia
- 71 Paraplegia
- 72 Spinal Cord Disorders/Injuries
- 73 Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis and Other Motor Neuron Disease
- 74 Cerebral Palsy
- 75 Myasthenia Gravis/Myoneural Disorders and Guillain-Barre Syndrome/Inflammatory and Toxic Neuropathy
- 76 Muscular Dystrophy
- 77 Multiple Sclerosis
- 78 Parkinson's and Huntington's Diseases
- 79 Seizure Disorders and Convulsions
- 80 Coma, Brain Compression/Anoxic Damage