

# CODING SPOTLIGHT

## FOCUS ON HIV and AIDS



### Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

Health plan claims analysis reveals that HIV/AIDS is a frequently miscoded diagnosis. It's important that accurate coding and correct documentation, per ICD-10-CM Guidelines, are used for reporting HIV and AIDS. It is imperative that you only code confirmed cases of HIV infection and illness. In the outpatient context, confirmation does not require a positive serology or culture for HIV; the provider's diagnostic statement that the patient is HIV positive or has an HIV-related illness is sufficient.

In accordance with ICD-10 coding, if a patient is seen for an unrelated condition (such as traumatic injury), the code for the unrelated condition should be the principal diagnosis. Patients previously diagnosed with any HIV illness (B20) should NEVER be assigned to R75 (inconclusive serology or no manifestation of illness) or Z21 (Asymptomatic infection status).

When coding for HIV testing, you should use any additional codes for associated high-risk behaviors. For additional information, please review the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services' [ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting](#).

Coding grids are included below and to the right to assist you in determining the appropriate codes.

ICD-10-CM HIV/AIDS categories	Code
Human immunodeficiency virus – HIV/AIDS includes AIDS, AIDS-related complex (ARC) and HIV infection symptomatic	B20
Asymptomatic human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)	Z21
HIV infection in pregnancy, childbirth, or the puerperium	Code
Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) disease complicating pregnancy, childbirth, and the puerperium	O98.7

## Quality Corner

### Testing for HIV

The Z codes associated with testing and counseling for **negative results**:

ICD-10-CM Code	Condition
<b>Z11.4</b>	Encounter for screening for human immunodeficiency virus
<b>Z20.6</b>	Contact with and (suspected) exposure to human immunodeficiency virus
<b>Z71.7</b>	HIV counseling: Only used when negative result notification or during testing when status is unknown
<b>R75</b>	Inconclusive serology or no manifestation of illness

*The content in this Newsletter is for informational purposes only and not intended as medical or coding advice or to direct treatment. Physicians and other health care providers are solely responsible for their treatment and coding decisions and should not use the information presented to substitute independent judgment.*

<sup>1</sup>Christopher Weaver, et al., 2024, July 8, Wall Street Journal, 2024, July 15. [[www.wsj.com/health/healthcare/medicare-health-insurance-diagnosis-payments-b4d99a5d](https://www.wsj.com/health/healthcare/medicare-health-insurance-diagnosis-payments-b4d99a5d)]

<sup>2</sup>C Johnson, et al. 2015 July, *A report on the misdiagnosis of HIV Status*, 2024, July 15. [[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK316023/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK316023/)]