

Prolonged Services Policy, Professional

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT THIS REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

You are responsible for submission of accurate claims. This reimbursement policy is intended to ensure that you are reimbursed based on the code or codes that correctly describe the health care services provided. UnitedHealthcare reimbursement policies may use Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®*), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) or other coding guidelines. References to CPT or other sources are for definitional purposes only and do not imply any right to reimbursement.

This reimbursement policy applies to all health care services billed on CMS 1500 forms and, when specified, to those billed on UB04 forms. Coding methodology, industry-standard reimbursement logic, regulatory requirements, benefits design and other factors are considered in developing reimbursement policy.

This information is intended to serve only as a general reference resource regarding UnitedHealthcare's reimbursement policy for the services described and is not intended to address every aspect of a reimbursement situation. Accordingly, UnitedHealthcare may use reasonable discretion in interpreting and applying this policy to health care services provided in a particular case. Further, the policy does not address all issues related to reimbursement for health care services provided to UnitedHealthcare enrollees. Other factors affecting reimbursement may supplement, modify or, in some cases, supersede this policy. These factors may include, but are not limited to: legislative mandates, the physician or other provider contracts, the enrollee's benefit coverage documents and/or other reimbursement, medical or drug policies. Finally, this policy may not be implemented exactly the same way on the different electronic claims processing systems used by UnitedHealthcare due to programming or other constraints; however, UnitedHealthcare strives to minimize these variations. UnitedHealthcare may modify this reimbursement policy at any time by publishing a new version of the policy on this Website. However, the information presented in this policy is accurate and current as of the date of publication.

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Application

This reimbursement policy applies to services reported using the 1500 Health Insurance Claim Form (a/k/a CMS-1500) or its electronic equivalent or its successor form. This policy applies to all products and all network and non-network physicians and Other Qualified Health Care Professionals (QHP), including, but not limited to, non-network authorized and percent of charge contract physicians and Other QHP.

UnitedHealthcare Commercial

This Reimbursement Policy applies to all UnitedHealthcare Commercial benefit plans.

UnitedHealthcare Individual Exchange

This Reimbursement Policy applies to all Individual Exchange benefit plans.

Policy

Overview

This policy identifies when UnitedHealthcare will separately reimburse physicians or Other QHP for Prolonged Services when reported in conjunction with companion Evaluation & Management (E/M) codes or other services.

In accordance with The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and American Medical Association (AMA), Prolonged Services without Direct Patient Contact (CPT codes 99358-99359) will not be separately reimbursed when reported with Care Management (CM) CPT codes 99484, 99487, 99489, 99490, 99492-99494 and Transitional Care Management (TCM) CPT codes 99495 and 99496.

For the purpose of this policy, the Same Individual Physician or Other QHP is the same individual rendering health care services reporting the same Federal Tax Identification number.

Reimbursement Guidelines

UnitedHealthcare reimburses Prolonged Services when reported with E/M codes in which time is a factor in determining level of service in accordance with CPT and or HCPCS guidelines. Physicians or Other QHP should report only Prolonged Services beyond the typical duration of the service on a given date, even if the time spent by the physician or Other QHP is not continuous. Providers should not include the time devoted to performing separately reportable services when determining the amount of prolonged services time. For example, the time devoted to performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPT code 92950) should not be included in prolonged services time. A prolonged service of less than 30 minutes total duration on a given date is not separately reported because the work involved is included in the total work of the evaluation and management codes.

According to CPT and HCPCS, prolonged service codes 99359, 99415-99416, 99437, 99439, G0316-G0318 and G0513-G0514, G2212 are considered add-on codes and should not be reported without the appropriate primary code.

Prolonged services for labor and delivery are not separately reimbursable services. As described in American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) coding guidelines, prolonged services are not reported for services that do not have a time component such as labor and delivery management.

In accordance with CMS and the AMA, Prolonged Services without Direct Patient Contact (CPT codes 99358-99359) will not be separately reimbursed when reported with CM CPT codes 99417, 99484, 99487, 99489, 99490, 99492-99494 and TCM CPT codes 99495 and 99496.

Definitions

Prolonged Services with Direct Patient Contact	Prolonged Services with Direct Patient Contact are when a physician or Other Qualified Health Care Professional provides prolonged services beyond the usual service in either the inpatient or outpatient setting. Direct Patient Contact is face-to-face and includes additional non-face-to-face services on the patient's floor or unit in the hospital or nursing facility during the same session. This service is reported in addition to the designated evaluation and management services at any level and any other services provided at the same session as evaluation and management services.
Prolonged Services without Direct Patient Contact	Prolonged Services without Direct Patient Contact are used when a prolonged service is provided that is neither face-to-face time in the office or outpatient setting, nor additional unit/floor time in the hospital or nursing facility setting during the same session of an evaluation and management service and is beyond the usual physician or Other Qualified Health Care Professional service time.
Same Individual Physician or Other Qualified Health Care Professional	The same individual rendering health care services reporting the same Federal Tax Identification number.

Questions and Answers

1	Q: Do Prolonged Services with Direct Patient Contact include patient time spent with office staff and/or patient time spent unaccompanied in the office?
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	<p>A: No. The Prolonged Services with Direct Patient Contact must be between the patient and the physician or Other QHP who provided the initial service. Office staff includes anyone who is not the primary provider of the service. The time a patient remains unaccompanied by the primary provider also cannot be counted.</p>
2	<p>Q: Is time spent waiting for test results or for potential changes in a patient's condition reported as prolonged services?</p> <p>A: Per CMS, time spent waiting for test results or for changes in the patient's condition cannot be reported as prolonged services.</p>
3	<p>Q: Should a physician or Other QHP report prolonged services with preventive medicine E/M codes (CPT codes 99381-99397)?</p> <p>A: No. Preventive medicine codes are not time-based codes; therefore, prolonged services are not separately reimbursed.</p>
4	<p>Q: May a physician or Other QHP report prolonged services (CPT codes G2212 and G0316-G0318) with modifier 25 when a significant and separately identifiable E/M service is performed along with a separate service or procedure?</p> <p>A: According to CPT, modifier 25 may be appended to prolonged services codes if there is adequate supporting documentation that describes the service provided and indicates the service is significant and separately identifiable from another service or procedure on the same date of service.</p>

Resources

American Medical Association, *Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®)* and associated publications and services

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS Manual System and other CMS publications and services

Publications and services of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)

History

8/1/2025	<p>Policy Version Change</p> <p>Updated Policy Verbiage in Application Section, Overview Section, Reimbursement Guidelines Section, Questions and Answers Section with respect to Other Qualified Health Care Professional</p> <p>History Section: Entries prior to 8/1/2023 archived</p>
4/1/2024	<p>Template Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transferred content to shared policy template that applies to both UnitedHealthcare Commercial and Individual Exchange benefit plans. • Updated <i>Application</i> section to indicate this Reimbursement Policy applies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All UnitedHealthcare Commercial benefit plans ○ All Individual Exchange benefit plans
3/31/2024	<p>Policy Version Change</p> <p>Overview Section: Updated</p> <p>Reimbursement Guidelines Section: Updated</p> <p>Questions and Answers section: Updated</p>
1/1/2024	<p>Policy Version Change</p> <p>Policy Logo Updated</p>



	History Section: Entries prior to 1/1/2022 archived
9/1/2006	Policy implemented by UnitedHealthcare Employer & Individual
11/15/2005	Policy approved by the Payment Policy Oversight Committee