Billing Code Changes Are a Step Forward for Care Centers

Medical billing and coding is an important part of business management at MDA Care Centers. Codes enable them to accurately bill insurance providers and provide useful data about diseases, treatments, and patient experiences. Two recent changes in coding are helping MDA Care Centers work more efficiently and provide better care to patients with neuromuscular diseases.

New LGMD Codes

New ICD-10-CM codes for limb-girdle muscular dystrophy (LGMD) and several of its subtypes were implemented in October 2022. "This adoption of ICD-10-CM codes for the most prevalent LGMDs should substantially accelerate the understanding of LGMD, thus also advancing efforts to better treat these diseases," says Paul Melmeyer, vice president of Public Policy & Advocacy for MDA.

MDA released two resources to educate clinicians about these new codes:

- A downloadable one-page guide to the LGMD ICD-10 Diagnostic Codes

- A webinar featuring Nicholas Johnson, MD, MSCI, FAAN, and other experts outlining the changes to the LGMD ICD-10 codes and the potential impact on the LGMD community

Billing By Time

Another coding change benefiting Care Centers is coding that captures times spent on patient care. "It used to be, if we wanted to bill by exam, we would need to do a full exam, looking at breathing, pupils, the heart, and more that is not necessarily affected by a neuromuscular disorder," says Catherine Lomen-Hoerth MD, PhD, a neurologist and director of the ALS Care Center at UCSF Health. "Now, we can do more of a focused exam and bill by time."

Dr. Lomen-Hoerth notes these codes can capture not only time spent with a patient in the exam room, but everything done in a day connected to that patient. "This can include talking to them, a team meeting before the clinic occurs, discussing in a post team meeting about recommendations, writing up notes, communicating to the referring provider or the nurse, talking to the pharmacy, and more," she says. "Our university uses a time calculator that comes up with the billing code for prolonged services that's appropriate."