MOLINA® HEALTHCARE

Lab Codes with Modifiers 59 and 91 Coding Policy

Modifier 59 and 91 Overview

Modifier 59 (distinct) and 91 (repeat) are valid modifiers for most laboratory services and should be used when multiple laboratory services described by a single code are provided to a patient on one day by the same provider. It is important to use the right modifier for the situation.

CPT Assistant noted in May 2009:
For laboratory reporting purposes, modifier 59 is used, for example, to report procedures that are distinct or independent, such as performing the same procedure (that uses the same procedure code) for testing of a different specimen or different strain. Use modifier 59 when separate results are reported for different species or strains that are described by the same CPT code.

As a matter of differentiation, modifier 91, Repeat Clinical Diagnostic laboratory Test, is used when, in the course of treating a patient, it is necessary to repeat the same laboratory test on the same day to obtain subsequent test results. An example is repeated blood testing for the same patient, using the same CPT code, performed at different intervals during the same day (e.g., initial and three subsequent blood potassium levels).

Modifier 91 is used when multiple, serial laboratory tests are needed in the course of treatment of a patient (e.g., repeat blood glucose tests). Modifier 91 is used when a clinical laboratory test must be repeated on the same date of service and the results are used to assist in managing the treatment of a patient.

CPT guidance throughout the laboratory code section often advises that modifier 59 should be used for "different species or strains reported by the same code" or for "multiple specimens or sites".

According to CPT, it is not appropriate to append modifier 91 or modifier 59 to laboratory codes in the following circumstances.

- Used for a rerun of a laboratory test to confirm results
- Due to testing problems for the specimen or equipment
- When another procedure code describes a series test
- When the procedure code describes a series of test
- For any reason when a normal one-time result is required