

Risk Adjustment Coding Corner

Neighborhood News – July 2026

Crohn's Disease

- This disease is characterized by chronic inflammation of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract, affecting mostly the end of the small bowel and the beginning of the large bowel. It is not limited to the GI tract, however, and may affect the joints, eyes, skin, and liver.
- Documentation needs to be clear and detailed. Specificity matters for accurate code selection (ICD-10 codes K50.00 – K50.919).
 - **Complications/Manifestations**
 - This will allow the coder to apply the correct combination code.
 - Ex. Rectal bleeding (K50.011), fistula (K50.013), abscess (K50.014), and intestinal obstructions (K50.012)
 - **Status**
 - Active or symptomatic remission
 - Remission is coded the same way as Crohn's without complications (ending in 0).
 - **Site**
 - Avoid using unspecified terminology. Terms such as "Crohn's flare" or "active Crohn's" are not adequate. Documentation should be site specific and state any complications.
 - Ex. Small intestine (K50.0x), large intestine (K50.1x), and both small and large (K50.8x)

RADV Audit Reminder

- It's audit season once again! Conducted annually from May to January by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for the Commercial (Affordable Care Act) population, Risk Adjustment Data Validation (RADV) audits ensure that diagnoses submitted for risk adjustment are supported by documentation in the enrollees' medical records. If diagnoses are not properly supported, health plans may be subject to overpayment collection.
- During audits, you may see increased activity in your offices with NHPRI personnel pulling charts for RADV. (This may feel routine, since Neighborhood nurses often conduct on-site retrospective record retrieval throughout the year to ensure coders can capture conditions not billed on claims.)
- You may also receive signature attestation requests when records lack a valid or legible signature.

We sincerely appreciate your continued cooperation and flexibility in these efforts!

References

- <https://www.bluecrossnc.com/providers/provider-news/2023/documentation-coding-inflammatory-bowel-disease-crohns-ulcerative-colitis#:~:text=Specificity:,K51.019>
- https://www.aapc.com/blog/29060-icd-10-coding-tip-crohns-disease/?srslid=AfmBOorIwqhTN7OD6G0Qsz8MnjEsuwlOXyLoP_ oduz6XHkC9r_HRw86L
- <https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/crohns-disease/#causes>

We want to hear from you!

Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island welcomes your input for future Risk Adjustment Coding Corner topics. What would you like to learn more about? Please send any suggestions, feedback, or questions to RiskAdjustment@nhpri.org.