

Risk Adjustment Coding Corner

Neighborhood News – April 2024

CMS Risk Model Changes

A new version of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Hierarchical Condition Category (CMS-HCC) risk adjustment model will be phased in over three years, starting in 2024. Version 28 (V28) includes changes in the Medicare Advantage (MA) capitation rate and risk adjustment methodologies, compared to its predecessor, V24.

These changes will significantly impact risk adjustment factor (RAF) scores and how health plans and medical practices manage patient risk and allocate resources. Now more than ever, accurate and comprehensive coding will be needed to ensure that a patient's health status is fully captured.

Documentation and Reporting: Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)

Thirty-seven million adults in the United States are living with CKD - and approximately 90% do not know they have it. CKD is most often caused and worsened by hypertension and diabetes, creating a high-risk yet underdiagnosed patient population.

Primary care physicians (PCPs) play a crucial role in the identification and care of patients with CKD. The PCP will likely be the first to screen and discover a patient has CKD. PCPs manage the early stages of the disease and refer patients with moderate to severe disease to a nephrologist. Clear, detailed documentation shared between the patient's PCP and nephrologist is the first and best defense against disease progression, allowing for more accurate coding.



Changes made in the updated CMS risk model, V28, will render documentation more important than ever. So, how do we level up?

- Screening lab work (GFR): Early and annually
- Stages of kidney disease: Remember stage 3 has been updated to 3a or 3b
- Bring test results into the progress note
- Document to the highest level of specificity
- Avoid vague terminology such as chronic renal insufficiency or chronic renal failure
- Include all underlying conditions, e.g., hypertension, diabetes, CHF
- Include dialysis status, transplant status, and any non-compliance

References

- <https://www.aapc.com/blog/88300-get-ready-for-cms-hcc-v28/>
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- <https://www.molinahealthcare.com/~media/Molina/PublicWebsite/PDF/providers/wa/Marketplace/chronic-kidney-disease.pdf>
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