

## Risk Adjustment Coding Corner

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### Mental Health Disorders

In audits conducted by the Office of Inspector General, substance use disorder (SUD) and major depressive disorder (MDD) are frequently miscoded and are a subject of scrutiny. Accurate code assignment, which demands the highest level of specificity, is crucial for capturing the complete clinical picture of these conditions.

- **Substance Use Disorder (SUD)**
  - SUD cannot be coded generically. Further specificity is needed to fully document the condition.
  - SUD has a wide range of codes to encompass severity, remission status, and any related substance induced disorders.
  - The DSM-5 categorizes alcohol use disorder into mild, moderate, and severe sub-classifications, each with distinct criteria for use, abuse, or dependence.
- **Major Depressive Disorder (MDD)**
  - MDD coding also specifies severity, the number of episodes, and the current clinical status, which are key focuses during audits. Audits often focus on a need for ongoing assessment of depression and monitoring of medications and their side effects.
  - Important specifications include:
    - **Severity:** Mild, moderate, or severe (severe may also occur with or without psychotic features)
    - **Episode Type:** Single or recurrent
    - **Remission status:** Partial or full

### References

- [Coding Opioid Use Disorder](#) (American Academy of Professional Coders)
- [Alcohol Use Disorder: A Comparison Between DSM–IV and DSM–5](#) (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism)
- [Substance Use Disorders](#) (Merck Manual)
- [Documenting and Coding Major Depressive Orders](#) (Health Alliance)
- [Documentation Requirements for High-Risk Diagnoses](#) (American Academy of Professional Coders)

### We want to hear from you!

Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island invites your contributions for future risk adjustment content. What would you like to learn more about? Please send any suggestions, feedback, or questions to

[RiskAdjustment@nhpri.org](mailto:RiskAdjustment@nhpri.org).