CPT 97597—CPT 97598 CCI Edit Glitch
APMA has learned of an issue when billing selective debridement codes CPT 97597 and 97598 in combination. Currently, the National Correct Coding Initiative (NCCI or CCI) edits bundle CPT 97597 (the first 20 sq cm of selective wound debridement) and CPT 97598 (the add-on code representing each additional 20 sq cm) together.

The edit bundle designation has an indicator of “0” (a zero indicator means that no modifier will ever unbundle these codes when they are billed together). In addition, the NCCI lists CPT 97598—the lesser-valued service—as the Column 1 code in the edit bundle with CPT 97597—the higher-valued service—the Column 2 code. All this means only one of the two therapy codes will be recognized and reimbursed (i.e., CPT 97598—the add-on code).

APMA has corresponded with the NCCI director regarding this bundling edit error. The NCCI is currently working on a solution and recommends that APMA members delay submission of claims reporting combination of CPT 97597 and CPT 97598 until the NCCI replacement file is in place and implemented by CMS. The April 1, 2011, version of NCCI does not contain this edit error. APMA is still exploring a more immediate solution. NCCI assures APMA they will be working to provide one, if possible. At this time, there has been no indication that claims submitted but processed in error will be automatically reprocessed. APMA is checking with CMS for a clarification.

Note: In general, for submission of claims for active wound care management selective debridement (CPT 97597, 97598), DPMs may likely submit far fewer claims for selective debridement over 20 sq cm than claims for selective debridement 20 sq cm or less.