

## Documenting and coding chronic kidney disease

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is the second-most prevalent chronic condition associated with HCC coding in Security Health Plan's Medicare Advantage population, surpassed only by diabetes in prevalence, and with a cause-and-effect relationship existing between the conditions for many patients.

Complete, consistent and specific documentation and coding of CKD is essential for assigning accurate Hierarchical Condition Category (HCC) risk factor coefficients to patients with the condition. CKD stage 3a, 3b, 4 and 5 are associated with HCC coding. Apply the diagnosis, status, and plan (DSP) algorithm to your documentation of CKD as noted below.

### **Diagnosis:** CKD stage 1 - 5

- Specificity: Clearly identify current stage.
- Consistency: Clarify current stage; clearly identify historical versus current stage of CKD.

### **Status**

- Lab data: Providers must interpret and document lab results (eGFR, BUN, creatinine, etc.) to the patient's current stage. Coders are not allowed to interpret lab data.
- Patient symptoms: Document symptoms, such as dry, itchy skin, nausea and vomiting, change in urine output.
- Exam findings: Note findings such as edema, weight changes, BP elevation.
- Associated condition(s):
  - Hypertension
  - Diabetes

### **Plan:** Management

- Medications
- Dietary modifications
- Plan for repeat testing or appointment
- Nephrology or other referrals
- Dialysis: Note type, access site and frequency.
- Transplant status: Document transplant details. Patients may continue to have CKD post-transplant; this is not considered a complication and should be documented and coded.

Patients with CKD often have other chronic conditions. It is important to document any causal relationships between these conditions. Use verbiage such as "due to" or "caused by," for example. The combination of these conditions may affect ICD 10 diagnosis code and associated risk factor score assignment for the patient. It is possible that the combination may change where the diagnosis falls in the HCC coding hierarchy. Consider noting the associated conditions as seen in the examples that follow.

- CKD + Diabetes: Patient has “Diabetic CKD stage 3b” or “CKD stage 3b due to DM 2.”
- CKD + Hypertension: Patient with “hypertensive CKD stage 5.”
- CKD + Hypertension + Heart Disease: Patient with “hypertensive heart and CKD stage 4.”