

COVID-19 Pearls (Inpatient)

- COVID-19 is a virulent novel (never previously identified) coronavirus strain.
- U07.1 COVID-19 is the new code effective 4/1/2020, with equivalent verbiage of “coronavirus-19” and “coronavirus-2019” outlined in the Alphabetic Index.
- U07.1 can only be assigned in any one of the following three instances:
 - Provider documentation of COVID-19 (*without* the use of uncertain terms), OR
 - Documentation of a positive COVID-19 test result, OR
 - Presumptive positive COVID-19 test result, meaning there has been a positive test at a local or state level, but it has not yet been confirmed by the CDC.
 - CDC confirmation of local/state tests for COVID-19 is no longer required.
- If the provider documents uncertain verbiage for COVID-19, such as “suspected”, “likely”, “probable”, “inconclusive”, etc., **do not assign code U07.1**.
 - o This is an exception to coding guideline section II.H, Uncertain Diagnosis.
 - o Code assignment then defaults to the signs/symptoms or other diagnoses that meet the definition of principal diagnosis (pneumonia, acute respiratory failure, etc.).

Query the provider for diagnosis validation if uncertain verbiage describing COVID-19 is documented (“suspected COVID-19”, “likely COVID-19”, etc.). Recommend using the following multiple-choice query options (with all relevant clinical indicators listed separately in the compliant query):

- COVID-19 as clinically evidenced by _____
(please specify in health record)
- The patient does not have clinical evidence of COVID-19
- Unable to clinically determine

- Sequence U07.1 first (when it meets the definition of principal diagnosis), with exceptions for pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium codes, and sepsis POA codes.
 - Chapter 15 codes always take sequencing priority.
 - If sepsis is POA with supporting documentation, coding guidelines instruct to code the systemic infection first.
 - Sequence A41.89 Other specified sepsis (for viral sepsis) as principal diagnosis, followed by U07.1 and a code for the localized infection.
- o Use additional code(s) to identify pneumonia or other manifestations (not all-inclusive):
 - J12.89 *Other viral pneumonia*, for documented pneumonia due to COVID-19.
 - J80 *Acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS)* for ARDS due to COVID-19.
 - J96.0-, *Acute respiratory failure*, or J96.2-, *Acute and chronic respiratory failure* for acute (or chronic) respiratory failure due to COVID-19.
- Patients admitted to the hospital are more likely to have an increased severity of illness due to current advice that people remain at home unless they develop respiratory symptoms.
- The health record should contain supporting documentation of all associated manifestations of COVID-19 (pneumonia, acute respiratory failure, sepsis, ARDS, etc.), as well as the appropriate POA status for each condition.
- All patient co-morbidities should be documented and supported for communication along the continuum, statistical purposes, risk adjustment, and quality reporting, and mortality indexing.

References

- American Hospital Association. (2014, 1Q). *Probable diagnoses on outpatient radiology reports*. Coding Clinic®.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, April 4). *Frequently Asked Questions: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)*. National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. Division of Viral Diseases. www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#covid19-basics
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, March 31). *International classification of diseases, tenth revision, clinical modification (ICD-10-CM)*. National Center for Health Statistics. Note that both April 1, 2020 official guidelines and April 1, 2020 addenda are found on the same linked page. www.cdc.gov/nchs/icd/icd10cm.htm
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, March 20). *Symptoms of Coronavirus*. National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. Division of Viral Diseases. www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html
- Coding Clinic® Advisor. (2020, April 1). *Frequently Asked Questions Regarding ICD-10-CM Coding of COVID-19*. American Hospital Association. www.codingclinicadvisor.com/faqs-icd-10-cm-coding-covid-19
- Holden, K. (Ed.). (2020). ICD-10-CM expert for hospitals: The complete official code set. Optum360°.

NOTE: The information contained in this document is accurate at the time of development (April 7, 2020).

AMN Revenue Cycle Solutions strongly recommends referring to the latest CDC guidelines and advice, as well as further official coding advice that is published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and the American Hospital Association's Coding Clinic®.

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