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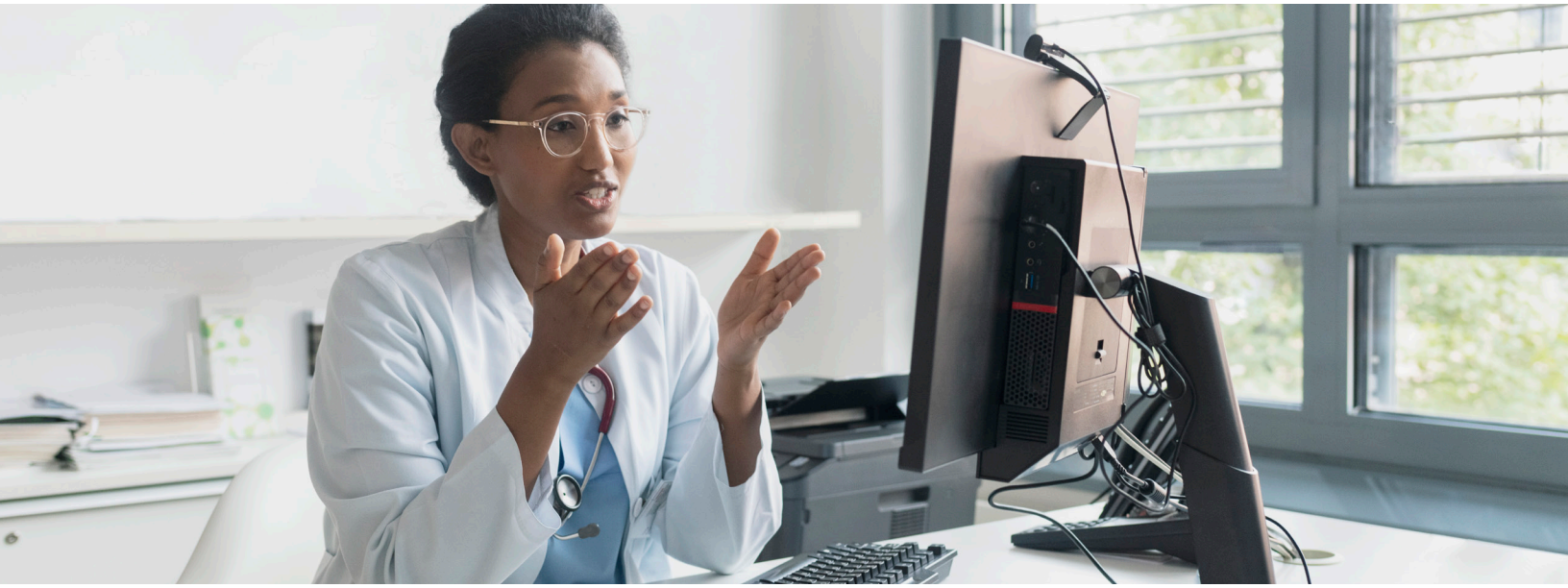

Documentation and Coding

# Obesity and Morbid Obesity

Obesity is a chronic, progressive disease. Accurately and completely coding and documenting obesity and morbid obesity can help identify and address related comorbidities that may impact our members' overall health status.

According to the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:**

- More than 40% of U.S. adults have obesity
- Morbid obesity, or a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or more, affects 9% of adults
- Adults with obesity have higher risk for developing conditions including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke and some types of cancer

Below is information for outpatient and professional services from the **ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting**.

## Coding Obesity and Morbid Obesity

An obesity diagnosis is based on the clinician's diagnostic statement that the member has the condition. An additional code should be used to identify BMI, if known.

According to ICD-10-CM guidelines, **the clinician should document that the member is overweight, obese or morbidly obese**. Coders must use the clinician's statement to assign the corresponding E66 code. A coder can't code a weight diagnosis based on BMI calculations, lab values or other measurements.

| Sample ICD-10-CM Codes for Overweight and Obesity | |
|---|---|
| E66.01 | Morbid (severe) obesity due to excess calories |
| E66.09 | Other obesity due to excess calories |
| E66.1 | Drug-induced obesity |
| E66.2 | Morbid (severe) obesity with alveolar hypoventilation |
| E66.3 | Overweight |
| E66.8 | Other obesity |
| E66.9* | Obesity, unspecified |
| F32.9 | Single episode, unspecified |
| **Sample ICD-10-CM Codes for BMI** | |
| Z68.2_ | BMI 20-29, adult |
| Z68.3_ | BMI 30-39, adult |
| Z68.4_ | BMI 40 or greater, adult |
| Z68.5_ | BMI, pediatric |

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**Coders should use BMI codes only when there is an associated, reportable weight diagnosis, such as obesity.** A clinician other than the patient's provider, such as a nurse or dietician, may record BMI. However, BMI shouldn't be coded unless the clinician documents the associated weight diagnosis.

## BMI is a screening tool and not an indicator of health.

- BMI adult codes are for people age 20 years and older
- BMI pediatric codes are for people ages 2 to 19
- Don't code BMI in pregnancy

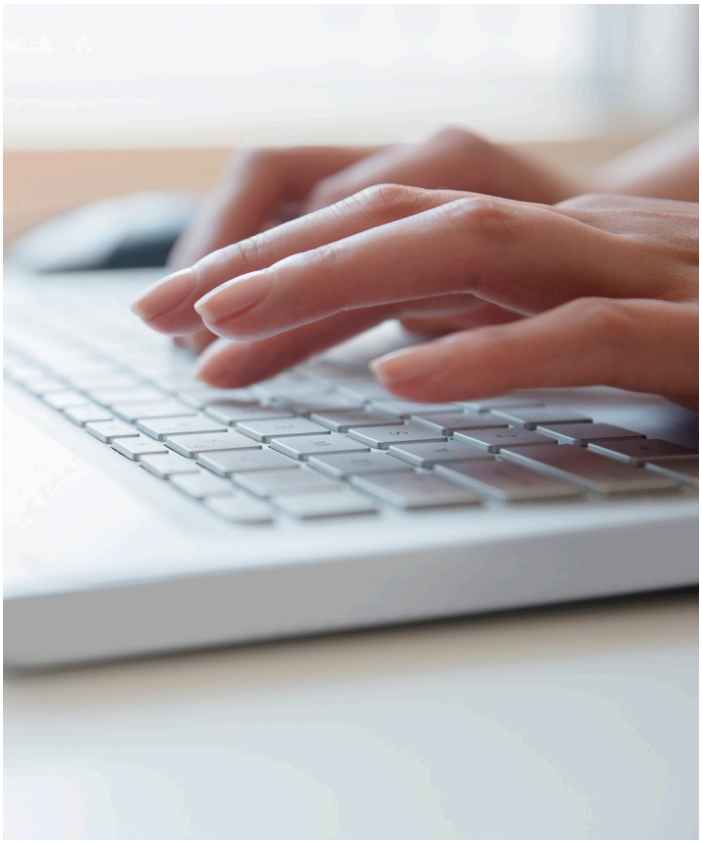
***E66.9 Obesity unspecified** is equivalent to Obesity Not Otherwise Specified (NOS). This code should rarely be used and only when nothing else, such as the reason for obesity, is known about the disorder.

## Tips to Consider

- Include patient demographics such as name, date of birth and date of service in all progress notes.
- Document legibly, clearly and concisely.
- Ensure a credentialed provider signs and dates all documents.
- Document how each diagnosis was monitored, evaluated, assessed and/or treated on the date of service.
- Note complications with an appropriate treatment plan.
- Take advantage of the Annual Health Assessment or other yearly preventative exam as an opportunity to capture conditions impacting member care.

## Resources

- **ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting**
- **Chapter 4: Endocrine, Nutritional and Metabolic Disease (E00-E89)**
- American Hospital Association **Coding Clinic** (subscription required), Fourth Quarter 2018, Body Mass Index



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