CodingIntel
AT THE CORNER OF CODING AND GETTING PAID

As Time Goes By
(Or, how we tell time in medical practices)

Presented by Betsy Nicoletti, M.S., CPC

CPT® : how do we tell time?

CPT® time rule

"A unit of time is attained when the mid-point is passed. For example, an hour is attained when 31 minutes have elapsed (more than midway between zero and sixty minutes). A second hour is attained when a total of 91 minutes has elapsed." CPT Professional Edition, 2025, p xx

Time flies for these services

Psychotherapy
30 minutes of psychotherapy: range is 16–38 minutes

Physical therapy
Services with 15 minute increments, time must be > 7.5 minutes (8 minutes)

Critical care (per CPT®) (CMS later slide)
First hour is >30 minutes until 74 minutes
Additional add-on 30 minutes is 75 minutes–104 minutes

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Critical care per CPT®

Total Duration of Critical Care	Code(s)
Less than 30 minutes	99232 or 99233
30-74 minutes	99291 x 1
75-104 minutes	99291 x 1 and 99292 x 1
105-134 minutes	99291 x 1 and 99292 x 2
135-164 minutes	99291 x 1 and 99292 x 3
165-194 minutes	99291 x 1 and 99292 x 4

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CPT® / CMS time threshold

Codes	CPT® time	CMS time
First hour, 99291	30-74 minutes	30-74 minutes
Additional 30 minutes, 99291, 99292	75-104 minutes (uses CPT® mid-point time rule)	104 minutes (30 minutes more than 74 minutes)
Additional 30 minutes, 99291, 99292 X 2	105-134 minutes (uses CPT® mid-point time rule)	134 minutes (30 minutes more than 104 minute)

What other codes follow the mid point rule?

- Advance care planning
- Some neuropsych testing codes
  - ○ 96116 Neurobehavioral status exam, first hour

But, not all codes

Moderate sedation: a law unto itself

- o 99151 Moderate sedation, initial 15 minutes
- o CPT ® says use for 10-22 minutes
- o Doesn't follow the CPT ® unit of time rule, doesn't require the full 15 minutes

Can't beat the clock here: E/M services

If using time for office visits, hospital services, home and nursing facility services, use the typical time listed in the code descriptor

The entire typical time must **be met or exceeded**

99213 When using time for code selection, 20 minutes must be met or exceeded

99232 When using total time on the date of the encounter for code selection, 35 minutes must be met or exceeded

Can't beat the clock here: full time in descriptor

Certain CPT® codes have editorial comments after the the code

- Indicates that the full time is required (doesn't use the CPT® time rule)
- Includes care management, remote monitoring

Can't beat the clock here: full time in descriptor

(Do not report 99457 for services of less than 20 minutes)

(Do not report 99458 for services of less than an additional increment of 20 minutes)

(Principal care management services of less than 30 minutes duration in a calendar month are not reported separately)

(Do not report 99489 for care management services of less than 30 minutes)

(Do not report 99453 for monitoring of less than 16 days)

(Do not report 99474 more than once in a calendar month)

And….time and CPT® codes

Some codes have time ranges:

- 99446 Interprofessional internet consult….*5-10 minutes*

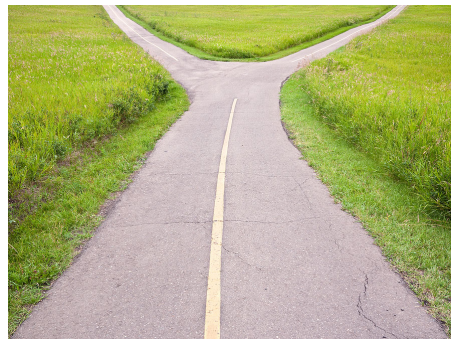**Some codes measure time in a calendar month, some in a 30 day period:**

- Code 99091: "once in a 30-day period"
- CCM codes " time in a calendar month"

Prolonged services

- Starting in 2021, CPT® and CMS took different paths
- CMS developed a HCPCS codes and assigned a status indicator of Invalid to the CPT® codes
- Base code must be selected based on time, highest level E/M only

CPT/CMS and prolonged care

Codes	Time ranges	Per CPT®, use add on code 99417 for this threshold time	Per CMS, use add on code G2212 for this threshold time
99205	60 minutes	75 minutes	89 minutes
99215	40 minutes	55 minutes	69 minutes

The saga continues, but I'm out of time

Prolonged care services

- Two CPT codes for use by practitioner with E/M services
- Four HCPCS codes
- For some HCPCS prolonged services, time spent on other than the DOS can be used
- CodingIntel members: we have a webinar for you

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Thank You

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