

Hierarchical Condition Category (HCC) Documentation/Coding Tip Sheet

Morbid Obesity

Reviewed 4/26/2023 (review due 10/1/2023)

Morbid Obesity

Morbid obesity indicates that the patient's Body Mass Index (BMI) is greater than 40 or greater than 35 with a weight related comorbid condition.ⁱ According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), patients are considered extremely or severely obese when they have a BMI of 40 or greaterⁱⁱ; ICD-10-CM uses the terms "overweight", "obesity", and "morbid obesity".

Guidelines for Documentation and Coding:

BMI is a screening tool, and it should be documented and coded with a weight related comorbid condition (e.g., morbid obesity, obesity, overweight, etc.). BMI codes should only be assigned when there is an associated, reportable diagnosis (such as obesity). The BMI can be documented by a nurse or dietician involved in the care of the patient. (see page 15 ICD-10 guidelines) Any associated clinical conditions must be documented by the provider.

Coding Tip: In order to assign a BMI code, the associated condition must meet the definition of a reportable diagnosis for the outpatient encounters, per section IV.J of the ICD-10 CM official guidelines for coding and reporting. "Reportable diagnoses are documented conditions that coexist at the time of the encounter/visit and that require or affect patient care, treatment or management. Do not code conditions that were previously treated and no longer exist."ⁱⁱⁱ

Table 1 – BMI ICD-10-CM Codes

ICD-10-CM Diagnosis Code	Code Description	HCC Code
Z68.41	Body mass index [BMI] 40.0-44.9, adult	HCC 22
Z68.42	Body mass index [BMI] 45.0-49.9, adult	HCC 22
Z68.43	Body mass index [BMI] 50.0-59.9, adult	HCC 22
Z68.44	Body mass index [BMI] 60.0-69.9, adult	HCC 22
Z68.45	Body mass index [BMI] 70 or greater, adult	HCC 22

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ICD-10-CM guidelines do not provide a list of comorbid conditions; the assignment depends on provider documentation

Table 2 – Morbid Obesity ICD-10-CM Codes

ICD-10-CM Diagnosis Code	Code Description	HCC Code
E66.01	Morbid (severe) obesity due to excess calories	HCC 22
E66.09	Other obesity due to excess calories	n/a
E66.1	Drug-induced obesity (used additional code)	n/a

E66.2	Morbid (severe) obesity with alveolar hypoventilation	HCC 22
E66.3	Overweight	n/a
E66.8	Other obesity	n/a
E66.9	Obesity, unspecified	n/a

- ICD-10-CM code assignment is based on provider (i.e., physician or other qualified health care practitioner such as a physician assistant or nurse practitioner) documentation.
- The provider’s diagnostic statement that the condition exists and the provider’s statement that the patient has a particular condition is sufficient.

Documentation Example:

- **Assessment:** 40 year old female with morbid obesity, BMI 38 with severe obstructive sleep apnea
- **Plan:** Continue weight loss program and use CPAP system during sleep
 - ICD-10 Codes: E66.01 – Morbid (severe) obesity, Z68.38 BMI 38.0-38.9, adult

Table 3 - Defining MEAT

Monitor	Signs, Symptoms, Disease progression or Disease regression
Evaluate	Results reviewed, Response to treatments and/ or medications
Assessment	Discussion, Counseling, Tests ordered, or Records reviewed
Treatment	Medications, Therapies (e.g., behavioral therapy, cognitive therapy, ECT), or referrals (e.g., BH, Psychiatry, Psychology)

Note: a referral alone no longer suffices to mean “addressed” in MEAT

Questions? Looking for additional information?

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References:

AHA, Coding Clinic for ICD-10-CM, Fourth Quarter 2018, page 77

Optum 360 ICD-10-CM: Professional for Physicians 2023. Salt Lake City: 2022

ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting FY 2023 -- UPDATED April 1, 2023 (October 1, 2022 - September 30, 2023)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, June 3, 2022 <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/basics/adult-defining.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, November 3, 2022 <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/problems.html>

ⁱ NHLBI Obesity Education Initiative https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/files/docs/guidelines/prctgd_c.pdf

ⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, June 3, 2022 <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/basics/adult-defining.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/fy-2023-icd-10-cm-coding-guidelines-updated-01/11/2023.pdf>