

AUDITING & COMPLIANCE TIP

Critical Care

When we audit critical care services, we look for several key points:

- * Status of the patient's condition;
- * Care rendered to stabilize or improve the patient's status;
- * Testing and work-up done to address issues;
- * Overall risk or morbidity/mortality; and,
- * Whether both the presenting problem and treatment provided support the critical care level.

Per CPT, "Critical care is the direct delivery by a physician(s) or other qualified health care professional of medical care for a critically ill or critically injured patient. A critical illness or injury acutely impairs one or more vital organ systems such that there is a high probability of imminent or life threatening deterioration in the patient's condition. Critical care involves high complexity decision making to assess, manipulate, and support vital system function(s) to treat single or multiple vital organ system failure and/or to prevent further life threatening deterioration of the patient's condition. Examples of vital organ system failure include, but are not limited to: central nervous system failure, circulatory failure, shock, renal, hepatic, metabolic, and/or respiratory failure. Although critical care typically requires interpretation of multiple physiologic parameters and/or application of advanced technology(s), critical care may be provided in life threatening situations when these elements are not present."

These notes are often very complex, but as auditors we need to answer two main questions. First, does the patient's condition fall into the critically ill category? Second, did the work done to stabilize/treat the patient involve high complexity decision making?

By clicking the image, you will download a PDF document that include two actual patient encounters. One of the encounters includes a note that accurately supports critical care services as outlined above. The other includes a note that fails to meet the criteria for critical care services.



Today's tip provided by:



Regan Tyler is one of NAMAS' key faculty members, teaching educational sessions across the country. Regan is also a Senior Consultant providing medical auditing services and education with our parent company, DoctorsManagement.

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