

Placeholder “X” in Diagnosis Codes

In an effort to aid Health Information Management Coding and Medical Billing Professionals with ICD-10, the following coding tip is provided with an educational intent.

ICD-10-CM (diagnosis codes)
uses a placeholder character “X.”

The “X” is used in certain diagnosis codes to allow for future expansion.

- Use the “X” to fill out empty characters when a code contains fewer than six characters and a 7th character applies.
- Where the placeholder exists, the “X” must be used to be considered a valid code.

Example:

S02.2XXA	Fracture of nasal bones, initial encounter for closed fracture
S97.01XA	Crushing injury of right ankle, initial encounter

Coding Clinic is the official resource and authority for ICD-10 coding rules and conventions.

This tip sheet was developed in collaboration with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Michigan, a non-profit corporation and independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. This overview is intended as an educational tool only and should not be relied upon as legal or compliance advice. If you have any legal questions about the information contained herein, you should consult your attorney or other professional legal services provider.