

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

Allowance of QW Modifier with Specific COVID Testing HCPCS Codes



Audience: ICO/Revenue Integrity, CDM/Revenue Liaison, Coding/HIM, Laboratory, Patient Financial Services, Reimbursement

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COVID-19 Response Team Owner: Finance

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What's Changed: Effective for claims with dates of service on or after September 23, 2020, CMS will allow HCPCS code 86328 to be billed with Modifier QW.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Medicare One-Time Notification Transmittal 10231 (CR 11927), released on July 24, 2020, announces the allowance of QW modifier (CLIA waived) with HCPCS code 87426 [Infectious agent antigen detection by immunoassay technique, (eg, enzyme immunoassay [EIA], enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay [ELISA], immunochemiluminometric assay [IMCA]) qualitative or semiquantitative, multiple-step method; severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (eg, SARS-CoV, SARS-CoV-2 [COVID-19])].

Medicare One-Time Notification Transmittal 10732 (CR 12269), released on April 26, 2021, announces the allowance of QW modifier (CLIA waived) with HCPCS code 87636 [Infectious agent detection by nucleic acid (DNA or RNA); severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Coronavirus disease [COVID-19]) and influenza virus types A and B, multiplex amplified probe technique].

Medicare One-Time Notification Transmittal 10827 (CR 12318), released on June 11, 2021, announces the allowance of QW modifier (CLIA waived) with HCPCS codes 0240U, 0241U, and 87637.

Medicare One-Time Notification Transmittal 11156 (CR 12557), released on December 10, 2021, announces the allowance of QW modifier (CLIA waived) with HCPCS code 86328.

Make sure that you refer to the transmittals for all instructions and guidelines.

References:

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/r10231otn.pdf>

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/mm11927.pdf>

<https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-emergency-use-authorizations-medical-devices/vitro-diagnostics-euas>

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/r10732otn.pdf>

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/mm12269.pdf>

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/r10827otn.pdf>

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/mm12318.pdf>

[r11156OTN.pdf \(cms.gov\)](#)[MM12557 - Addition of the QW Modifier to Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System \(HCPCS\) Code 86328 \(cms.gov\)](#)**Provider Types Affected:** Hospitals and Physicians**HCPCS Code 87426**

Medicare Contractors will allow the use of HCPCS code 87426 with Modifier QW for claims submitted by facilities with a valid, current Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) certificate of waiver with dates of service on or after June 25, 2020.

As of July 2, 2020, the Food and Drug Administration has issued two individual Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs) for antigen diagnostic tests for COVID-19 that are authorized for use at the Point of Care (POC) (i.e., in patient care settings operating under a CLIA Certificate of Waiver). HCPCS code 87426 describes the testing performed by these 2 EUA antigen SARS-CoV-2 tests. To be recognized as a test performed in a facility having a CLIA certificate of waiver, the modifier QW must be added.

The two EUA tests are as follows:

Date EUA Issued	Manufacturer	Diagnostic (Letter of Authorization)	Technology	Authorized Settings
07/02/2020	Becton, Dickinson and Company (BD)	BD Veritor System for Rapid Detection of SARS-CoV-2	Antigen	H, M, W
05/08/2020	Quidel Corporation	Sofia SARS Antigen FIA	Antigen	H, M, W

Authorized Settings:

- H - Laboratories certified under the CLIA, that meet requirements to perform high complexity tests.
- M - Laboratories certified under the CLIA, that meet requirements to perform moderate complexity tests.
- W - Patient care settings operating under a CLIA Certificate of Waiver.

HCPCS Code 87636

Medicare Contractors will allow the use of HCPCS code 87636 with Modifier QW for claims submitted by facilities with a valid, current Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) certificate of waiver with dates of service on or after October 6, 2020.

HCPCS Codes 0240U, 0241U, and 87637

Medicare Contractors will allow the use of the following HCPCS codes with Modifier QW for claims submitted by facilities with a valid, current Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) certificate of waiver with dates of service on or after October 6, 2020:

- 0240U - [Infectious disease (viral respiratory tract infection), pathogen-specific RNA, 3 targets (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2[SARS-CoV-2], influenza A, influenza B), upper respiratory specimen, each pathogen reported as detected or not detected]
- 0241U [Infectious disease (viral respiratory tract infection), pathogen-specific RNA, 4 targets (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 [SARS-CoV-2], influenza A, influenza B, respiratory syncytial virus [RSV]), upper respiratory specimen, each pathogen reported as detected or not detected]
- 87637 [Infectious agent detection by nucleic acid (DNA or RNA); severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Coronavirus disease [COVID-19]), influenza virus types A and B, and respiratory syncytial virus, multiplex amplified probe technique]

HCPCS Code 86328

Medicare Contractors will allow the use of HCPCS code 86328 (Test for detection of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (Covid-19) antibody, qualitative or semiquantitative) with Modifier QW for claims submitted by facilities with a valid, current CLIA certificate of waiver with dates of service on or after September 23, 2020.

ACTION NEEDED: Contractors will not search their files to either retract payment for claims already paid or to retroactively pay claims. However, contractors will adjust claims brought to their attention.

We appreciate your support as we work Together to ensure the safety of our patients, and community at large.