

Policy Name	Initial Inpatient Consultations
<p>Summary</p>	<p>CPT codes 99251 - 99255 are used to report physician consultations provided to hospital inpatients. Only one initial consultation per inpatient hospitalization will be reimbursed when submitted by the same physician for the same patient.</p> <p>The written or verbal request for consultation should be documented in the patient's medical record. The consultant's opinion and any services that were ordered or performed must also be documented in the patient's medical record and communicated by written report to the requesting source.</p> <p>If the consulting physician continues to care for the patient during the same inpatient hospitalization, subsequent hospital care codes should be reported.</p> <p>A consultation should not be performed as a split/shared E&M visit.</p>
<p>Definitions</p>	<p>Consultation - Encounter provided by a physician whose advice/opinion regarding evaluation and/or management of a specific problem is requested by a physician or other appropriate source.</p>
<p>Related Coding Information</p>	<p>99251 Initial inpatient consultation for a new or established patient, which requires these three key components: a problem focused history, a problem focused examination, and straightforward medical decision making. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other providers or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are self limited or minor. Physicians typically spend 20 minutes at the bedside and on the patient's hospital floor or unit.</p> <p>99252 Initial inpatient consultation for a new or established patient, which requires these three key components: an expanded problem focused history, an expanded problem focused examination, and straightforward medical decision making. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other providers or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are of low severity. Physicians typically spend 40 minutes at the bedside and on the patient's hospital floor or unit.</p>

Related Coding Information (Cont.)

- 99253** Initial inpatient consultation for a new or established patient, which requires these three key components: a detailed history, a detailed examination, and medical decision making of low complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other providers or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are of moderate severity. Physicians typically spend 55 minutes at the bedside and on the patient's hospital floor or unit.
- 99254** Initial inpatient consultation for a new or established patient, which requires three key components: a comprehensive history, a comprehensive examination, and medical decision making of moderate complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other providers or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are of moderate to high severity. Physicians typically spend 80 minutes at the bedside and on the patient's hospital floor or unit.
- 99255** Initial inpatient consultation for a new or established patient, which requires these three key components: a comprehensive history, a comprehensive examination, and medical decision making of high complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other providers or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are of moderate to high severity. Physicians typically spend 110 minutes at the bedside and on the patient's hospital floor or unit.

Resources

- Current Procedural Terminology (CPT)
- Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

Effective Date

3/01/97

Revision Date

01/01/06

Explanation of Change

2006 annual CPT update

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