BlueCross BlueShield of Vermont

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Coding Tips

This is one in a series of tip sheets focusing on accurate coding for specific conditions.

HEART FAILURE

Heart failure occurs when the heart muscle doesn't pump blood to the body as effectively as it should. Most of the time, it occurs slowly and presents as a chronic condition that is susceptible to acute decompensation. Less frequently, it starts out acute at the onset. Heart failure often develops after other underlying conditions have damaged or weakened the heart.

Congestive heart failure occurs when blood backs up into other parts of the body such as the liver, abdomen, lower extremities and lungs because of heart failure, causing a buildup of fluid and congestion.

Causes of heart failure include coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathy, arrhythmias, hypertension, myocarditis and valvular heart disease. Also, heart failure may contribute to the severity of other conditions such as kidney disease, diabetes, pulmonary embolism, endocarditis and anemia.

Heart failure can involve the left, right or both sides of the heart, but usually begins on the left side.
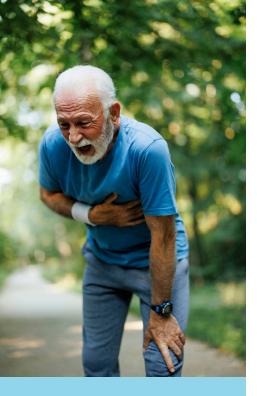
To assign the appropriate diagnosis code, documentation must be specific as to the type and acuity of heart failure and include any underlying condition(s):

Types of heart failure:
- Systolic heart failure, also known as heart failure with reduced ejection fraction (HFrEF)
- Diastolic heart failure, also known as heart failure with preserved ejection fraction (HFpEF)
- Combined systolic and diastolic heart failure

Type of acuity:
- Acute
- Chronic
- Acute on chronic

Also document any underlying condition:

- Hypertension
- Cardiomyopathy
- Myocarditis
- Coronary artery disease

Coding for Heart Failure

Documentation and accurate coding of heart failure has its own challenges as the type and acuity of heart failure must be specified in the documentation to assign the correct ICD-10-CM code.

- **I50.2 – Systolic (congestive) heart failure**
  - I50.21: Acute systolic (congestive) heart failure
  - I50.22: Chronic systolic (congestive) heart failure
  - I50.23: Acute on chronic systolic (congestive) heart failure
- **I50.3 – Diastolic (congestive) heart failure**
  - I50.31: Acute diastolic (congestive) heart failure
  - I50.32: Chronic diastolic (congestive) heart failure
  - I50.33: Acute on chronic diastolic (congestive) heart failure
- **I50.4 – Combined systolic and diastolic heart failure**
  - I50.41: Acute combined systolic (congestive) and diastolic (congestive) heart failure
  - I50.42: Chronic diastolic (congestive) heart failure
  - I50.43: Acute on chronic combined systolic (congestive) and diastolic (congestive) heart failure
- **I50.9 Heart failure, unspecified**
- **Heart failure with underlying conditions**
  - I09.81: Rheumatic heart failure
  - I11.0: Hypertensive heart disease with heart failure use additional code to identify type of heart failure (I50.-)
  - I13.2: Hypertensive heart and chronic kidney disease with heart failure and with stage 5 chronic kidney disease, or end stage renal disease add two additional codes, one to identify the type of heart failure (I50.-) and another to identify the stage of chronic kidney failure (N18.5 or N18.6)

Questions? Contact Blue Cross VT Risk Adjustment at **riskadjustment@bcbsvt.com** or at **(802)-371-3540**.

ICD-10-CM diagnostic codes and the ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting are subject to change. It's the responsibility of the provider to ensure that current ICD-10-CM diagnostic codes and the ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding are reviewed prior to the submission of claims.

Keep in mind that none of the information included in this document is intended to be legal advice and, as such, it remains the provider's responsibility to ensure that all the coding and documentation are done in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

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