

NCCI Edits for Therapy Services Reinstated – Effective October 1, 2020

CMS has reinstated changes to the National Correct Coding Initiative (NCCI) edit pairs. These changes went into effect October 1, 2020. Earlier this year, there was confusion on this topic as there were changes and reversals, and retroactive application. Hand and upper extremity therapists across the country who use some of these codes have experienced these changes and reversals.

Beginning October 1, 2020, the 59 modifier should be affixed when billing certain codes with evaluation codes and other commonly used CPT codes. The 59 modifier indicates that the two codes being billed are separate and distinct.

Below are some highlights related to hand and upper extremity therapy:

- The change affects OT and PT evaluation codes. OT and PT evaluation codes form edit pairs with the code for manual therapy techniques but can be billed with the 59 modifier. OT and PT evaluation codes are edited against 97750, 97755, 97763 and considered mutually exclusive and therefore cannot be billed with a modifier.
- OT and PT re-evaluation codes (97168 and 97164) are edited against 97750, 97755 and 97763 as mutually exclusive and therefore cannot be billed with a modifier.

For more detail and information:

<https://www.webpt.com/blog/post/breaking-news-cms-reinstates-previous-changes-to-ncci-edits/>

<https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Coding/NationalCorrectCodInitEd/NCCI-Coding-Edits>

<https://www.apta.org/your-practice/payment/coding-billing/correct-coding-initiative-cci>

<https://www.aota.org/-/media/Corporate/Files/Secure/Advocacy/Federal/Coding/NCCI-Edits-Cheat-Sheet.pdf> (AOTA members only)

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The chart below includes some of the more common hand therapy codes and if modifier-59 is allowed. This is not a comprehensive list. To access the full list, please go to

<https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Coding/NationalCorrectCodInitEd/NCCI-Coding-Edits>.

If column 2 states “not allowed” they cannot be billed with the code in column 1. If column 2 states “yes”, then modifier-59 can be used to bypass the code edit. Both outpatient practitioner codes as well as hospital codes are listed in chart.

| Column 1 CPT | Description | Column 2 CPT Practitioner | Modifier-59 | Column 2 CPT Hospital | Modifier-59 |
|--------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| 97165 | OT Eval-low complexity | 96125 | Yes | 96125 | Yes |
| | | 97140 | Yes | 97140 | Yes |
| | | 97168 | Not allowed | 97168 | Not allowed |
| | | 97750 | Not allowed | 97750 | Not allowed |
| | | 97755 | Not allowed | 97755 | Not allowed |
| | | 97763 | Not allowed | 97763 | Yes |
| 97166 | OT Eval-mod complexity | 96125 | Yes | 96125 | Yes |
| | | 97140 | Yes | 97140 | Yes |
| | | 97168 | Not allowed | 97168 | Not allowed |
| | | 97750 | Not allowed | 97750 | Not allowed |
| | | 97755 | Not allowed | 97755 | Not allowed |
| | | 97763 | Not allowed | 97763 | Yes |
| 97167 | OT Eval-high complexity | 96125 | Yes | 96125 | Yes |
| | | 97140 | Yes | 97140 | Yes |
| | | 97168 | Not allowed | 97168 | Not allowed |
| | | 97750 | Not allowed | 97750 | Not allowed |
| | | 97755 | Not allowed | 97755 | Not allowed |
| | | 97763 | Not allowed | 97763 | Yes |
| 97168 | OT Re-eval | 96125 | Yes | 96125 | Yes |
| | | 97750 | Not allowed | 97750 | Not allowed |
| | | 97755 | Not allowed | 97755 | Not allowed |
| | | 97763 | Not allowed | 97763 | Yes |
| 97161 | PT Eval –low complexity | 97140 | Yes | 97140 | Yes |
| | | 97750 | Not allowed | 97750 | Not allowed |
| | | 97755 | Not allowed | 97755 | Not allowed |
| | | 97763 | Not allowed | 97763 | Not allowed |
| 97162 | PT Eval –mod complexity | 97140 | Yes | 97140 | Yes |
| | | 97750 | Not allowed | 97750 | Not allowed |
| | | 97755 | Not allowed | 97755 | Not allowed |
| | | 97763 | Not allowed | 97763 | Not allowed |
| 97163 | PT Eval – high complexity | 97140 | Yes | 97140 | Yes |
| | | 97750 | Not allowed | 97750 | Not allowed |
| | | 97755 | Not allowed | 97755 | Not allowed |
| | | 97763 | Not allowed | 97763 | Not allowed |
| 97164 | PT Re-eval | 97750 | Not allowed | 97750 | Not allowed |
| | | 97755 | Not allowed | 97755 | Not allowed |
| | | 97763 | Not allowed | 97763 | Not allowed |
| 97032 | E stim | 97168 | Yes | 97168 | Yes |
| 97033 | Iontophoresis | 97168 | Yes | 97168 | Yes |
| 97035 | Ultrasound | 97018 | Yes | 97018 | Yes |
| | | 97022 | Yes | 97022 | Yes |
| | | 97024 | Yes | 97024 | Yes |
| | | 97026 | Yes | 97026 | Yes |
| | | 97168 | Yes | 97168 | Yes |

| Column 1 CPT | Description | Column 2 CPT Practitioner | Modifier-59 | Column 2 CPT Hospital | Modifier-59 |
|--------------|--|---------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| 97110 | Therapeutic Exercise | 97168 | Yes | 97168 | Yes |
| | | 97750 | Yes | 97750 | Yes |
| | | 97164 | Yes | 97164 | Yes |
| 97112 | Neuromuscular Re-education | 970222 | Yes | 97022 | Yes |
| | | 97036 | Yes | 97036 | Yes |
| | | 97168 | Yes | 97168 | Yes |
| | | 97750 | Yes | 97750 | Yes |
| | | 97164 | Yes | 97164 | Yes |
| 97140 | Manual therapy | 97018 | Yes | 97108 | Yes |
| | | 97124 | Not allowed | 97124 | Not allowed |
| | | 97168 | Yes | 97168 | Yes |
| | | 97530 | Yes | 97530 | Yes |
| | | 97750 | Yes | 97750 | Yes |
| | | 97164 | Yes | 97164 | Yes |
| 97530 | Therapeutic activities | 97113 | Yes | 97113 | Yes |
| | | 97116 | Yes | 97116 | Yes |
| | | 97168 | Yes | 97168 | Yes |
| | | 97533 | Yes | 97533 | Yes |
| | | 97535 | Yes | 97535 | Yes |
| | | 97537 | Yes | 97537 | Yes |
| | | 97542 | Yes | 97542 | Yes |
| | | 97750 | Yes | 97750 | Yes |
| | | 97755 | Yes | 97755 | Yes |
| | | 97164 | Yes | 97164 | Yes |
| | | 97535 | Self-care | 97168 | Yes |
| 97755 | Yes | | | 97755 | Yes |
| 97760 | Orthotic Management and training, initial | 97016 | Yes | 97016 | Yes |
| | | 97110 | Yes | 97110 | Yes |
| | | 97112 | Yes | 97112 | Yes |
| | | 97116 | Yes | 97116 | Yes |
| | | 97124 | Yes | 97124 | Yes |
| | | 97140 | Yes | 97140 | Yes |
| | | 97168 | Yes | 97168 | Yes |
| | | 97755 | Yes | 97755 | Yes |
| 97763 | Orthotic Management and training, subsequent | 97763 | Not allowed | 97763 | Not allowed |
| | | 97016 | Yes | 97016 | Yes |
| | | 97110 | Yes | 97110 | yes |
| | | 97112 | Yes | 97112 | Yes |
| | | 97116 | Yes | 97116 | Yes |
| | | 97124 | Yes | 97124 | Yes |
| | | 97140 | Yes | 97140 | yes |

**Chart adapted from AOTA NCCI Edits Cheat Sheet as well as other sources, NOT a complete listing of codes and code edits