

## Clinical documentation improvements and general coding tips: Morbid Obesity and BMI

A diagnosis of morbid obesity is always clinically significant and should always be reported. Coding morbid obesity and Body Mass Index (BMI) accurately requires the following documentation:

- Always report BMI documented with a weight-related diagnosis.
- Never convert a BMI code to a weight diagnosis. The provider must document a weight diagnosis for the BMI to be abstracted.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and National Library of Medicine (NIH), Morbid Obesity is defined as:
  - Being 100 pounds or more over your ideal body weight
  - Having a BMI of 40 or greater
  - Having a BMI of 35 or greater along with one or more co-morbidities (Co-morbidities may include hypertension, dyslipidemia, type 2 diabetes, coronary artery disease, etc.)
- A provider may state that a patient is morbidly obese with a BMI that is less than 40
- Code the provider diagnosis, regardless of documented BMI
  - Example: Provider documents obesity with a BMI of 45, then obesity would be abstracted
  - Example: A BMI of 52 is noted with no weight diagnosis, the provider should be queried. If no weight diagnosis is documented, then the BMI cannot be reported.

**Note:** The BMI is a screening tool, it does not define a person’s body fat or health. The provider’s weight diagnosis is the only acceptable documentation for coding morbid obesity.

ICD code	Overweight and Obesity ICD-10CM
E66.01	Morbid (Severe) obesity due to excess calories
E66.09	Other obesity due to excess calories
E66.1	Drug-induced obesity
E66.2	Morbid (severe) obesity with alveolar hypoventilation
E66.3	Overweight
E66.8	Other obesity
E66.9	Obesity, unspecified

ICD code	Sample ICD-10CM Codes for BMI
Z68.2_	BMI 20-29, adult
Z86.3_	BMI 30-39, adult
Z68.4_	BMI 40 or greater, adult

## References

AHA coding clinic, 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr, 2018, pges 77-83

<https://www.aapc.com/blog/45879-lets-get-on-the-same-page-when-coding-bmi-and-obesity/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/medgen/18128>

<https://acdis.org/articles/qa-reporting-bmi-icd-10-cm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/basics/adult-defining.html#Adult%20Body%20Mass%20Index>

*AmeriHealth coding and documentation education materials are based on current guidelines, are to be used for reference only, and are not intended to replace the authoritative guidance of the ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting as approved by the American Hospital Association (AHA), the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). Clinical and coding decisions are to be made based on the following:*

- 1. The independent judgment of the treating physician or qualified health care practitioner.*
- 2. The best interests of the patient.*
- 3. The clinical documentation as contained in the medical record.*

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