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#### About Maxim Health Information Services

Maxim Health Information Services (MHIS) provides superior quality [coding and auditing services](#) to healthcare organizations across the country. MHIS offers on-site coding support, remote coding services, auditing and review services, education and training, HIM outsourcing solutions, and services to the

Welcome to the first 2009 issue of Maxim Coding Corner<sup>SM</sup>! As a leader in the HIM industry, [Maxim Health Information Services](#) is committed to providing you with updates on coding-related topics that matter to you. This month, we are focusing on coding for preventative visits and office visits. Read on below to learn more.

#### Coding for Preventative Visits and Office Visits

##### What is the difference between a preventative visit and an office visit?

A preventative visit is when the patient is asymptomatic and comes in with no complaints but wants a complete physician examination. An office visit is when a patient comes in with complaints. Any time a patient's chief complaint is a problem, the visit is going to be a regular office visit.

##### Can preventative visits and office visits be billed together?

Preventive and regular office visits can be billed together. There are times when a patient comes in for a preventive medicine visit and while doing the exam the physician discovers another problem. When this situation occurs, you can bill both a preventive medicine visit and an office visit if the problem is significant enough to meet the key components of a problem-oriented office visit. The other way that you can bill both a preventive visit and an office visit is if during the course of the preventive visit, preexisting problems are addressed that are significant enough to meet the key components of a problem-oriented visit. If the two visits are billed together you would need to put a 25 modifier on the office visit. Whenever you bill both types of visits together, be sure that you link the appropriate diagnosis with the correct type of visit. Link the well diagnosis with the preventive visit, and the diagnoses that are being treated with the office visit.

##### Breakdown of preventative visits

99381-99387 are the codes for a New Patient Initial Comprehensive Preventive Medicine Visit. These codes are to be used when a new patient is seen for a preventative visit. A new patient is someone who has not been seen by the physician, or a physician of the same specialty in the same group, within three years of the date of service.

Department of Veterans Affairs' Medical Centers. MHIS provides qualified healthcare professionals to customers to meet their needs in an efficient and cost-effective manner. MHIS has some of the best [career opportunities](#) in the industry, with positions including on-site coding, remote coding, travel coding, auditing, and more.

99391-99397 are the codes for Established Patient Periodic Comprehensive Preventive Medicine Visit. These codes are to be used when an established patient is seen for a preventive visit. An established patient would be a patient seen by the same physician, or a physician of the same specialty in the same group, within three years of the date of service.

99401-99404 are the codes used for Preventive Medicine, Individual Counseling. These codes are used to report services provided to individuals at a separate encounter for the purpose of promoting health and preventing injury. These codes are not used to report counseling and risk factor reduction visits provided to patients with symptoms or established illness. If counseling a patient with symptoms or established illness, you should use the appropriate office visit codes.

99411-99412 are the codes for Preventive Medicine, Group Counseling. These codes are used to report services provided to a group of patients at a separate encounter for the purpose of promoting health and preventing injury. These codes are not used to report counseling and risk factor reduction visits provided to patients with symptoms or established illness.

**Examples of a preventive medicine visit:**

A patient comes in for a complete examination and she currently is not having any problems. In this case since the patient has no complaints it would be coded as a Preventive Medicine Visit.

A patient comes in to see the doctor for his annual exam. The patient has hypertension per medical history. The physician does a comprehensive history and examination. The first diagnosis the doctor lists is health maintenance. The second diagnosis is hypertension but he doesn't address the hypertension at this visit. This would be coded as a Preventive Medicine Visit.

**Example of office visit:**

A female patient comes in for abdominal pain. The physician does a history and exam which includes a pelvic exam. The doctor orders labs and an ultrasound. This would be an office visit and the diagnosis would be abdominal pain. Remember that a physician can do a pelvic exam for problems, so do not assume that all pelvic exams are for preventive reasons.

**Example of both preventive and office visits coded together:**

A patient comes in for her annual exam. While doing the breast exam the doctor finds a lump. The physician does a thorough exam of the breast and surrounding area and asks the patient more questions regarding any symptoms and other questions to get a better idea of what may be going on. At the end of the exam, the physician has diagnosis #1 of well visit and lists breast lump as # 2. He then orders an ultrasound of the breast. In this case you would code both a preventive visit and an office visit, since the physician is working up a new problem that was discovered during the exam. You would link the V70.0 to the preventive visit and 611.72 with the office visit.

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