Facts about Obesity & Protein–Calorie Malnutrition

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a reportable HEDIS/Star healthcare quality measurement. For the general population, as shown in the following table, BMI can provide sound clinical information on a person’s nutritional status. In order to determine that patients are at a healthy weight, the provider should record their height and weight, calculate the BMI, and document the BMI in the chart at least once or twice a year.¹

![BMI Classification Table]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>BMI Principal Cut-off Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underweight</td>
<td>&lt;18.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe Malnutrition</td>
<td>&lt;16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Malnutrition</td>
<td>16.00–16.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild Malnutrition</td>
<td>17.00–18.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal Range</td>
<td>18.50–24.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight</td>
<td>≥25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Obese</td>
<td>25.00–29.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obese</td>
<td>≥30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obese Class I</td>
<td>30.00–34.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obese Class II</td>
<td>35.00–39.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obese Class III (Morbid Obesity)</td>
<td>≥40.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Obesity

Based on recommendations by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), CMS will cover preventive services and counseling for obesity, under a new HCPCS code, G0447 (Face-to-Face Behavioral Counseling for Obesity, 15 minutes).²

Protein–Calorie Malnutrition

Among the elderly, significant mortality is associated when the BMI is less than 21.³ The prevalence of protein-calorie malnutrition varies depending on the clinical setting. Protein-calorie malnutrition is estimated at 4% in the community setting; 27% and 38% among the hospitalized elderly aged 60 – 79 and aged 80 and older, respectively; and 30–40% among those aged 70 years of age and older who have been hospitalized for over two weeks.⁴

Documentation Tips⁵ ⁶

The ICD-9-CM separates obesity and malnutrition into several specific code categories based on degree or severity. Clinical documentation should include:

- Weight loss or gain
- Physical examination signs
- BMI
- Laboratory values (total protein, albumin, pre-albumin)
- Degree or severity
- Treatment plan
- Underlying medical conditions
- While BMI may be coded by the medical assistant or other medical professional, the diagnosis must be coded based upon the provider’s documentation.⁵

ICD-9-CM Coding – Obesity⁶

- 278.00 Obesity, unspecified
- 278.01 Morbid Obesity (BMI 40 or greater)
- 278.02 Overweight (BMI 25–29.9)
- 278.03 Obesity hypoventilation syndrome (OHS, Pickwickian syndrome)

ICD-10-CM Coding – Obesity⁷

- 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 (Pickwickian syndrome)
- E66.3 Overweight
- E66.8 Other obesity
- E66.9 Obesity, unspecified

ICD-9-CM Coding – Protein-Calorie Malnutrition⁶

- 262 Other severe, protein-calorie malnutrition
- 263.0 Malnutrition of moderate degree
- 263.1 Malnutrition of mild degree
- 263.8 Other protein-calorie malnutrition
- 263.9 Unspecified protein-calorie malnutrition

ICD-10-CM Coding – Protein-Calorie Malnutrition⁷

- E43 Unspecified severe protein-calorie malnutrition
- E44.0 Moderate protein-calorie malnutrition
- E44.1 Mild protein-calorie malnutrition
- E46 Unspecified protein-calorie malnutrition