

Evaluation & Management (E/M) Services Guidelines 2021

Table 1: Complexity of Medical Decision Making

Number of Diagnoses or Management Options	Amount and/or Complexity of Data to be Reviewed	Risk of Complications and/or Morbidity or Mortality	Type of Decision Making
minimal	minimal or none	minimal	straightforward
limited	limited	low	low complexity
multiple	moderate	moderate	moderate complexity
extensive	extensive	high	high complexity

Table 2: Levels of Medical Decision Making (MDM)

Elements of Medical Decision Making

Code	Level of MDM (Based on 3 out of 3 Elements of MDM)	Number and Complexity of Problems Addressed at the Encounter	Amount and/or Complexity of Data to be Reviewed and Analyzed <i>*Each unique test, order or document contributes to the combination of 2 or combination of 3 in Category 1 below.</i>	Risk of Complications and/or Morbidity or Mortality of Patient Management
99211	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
99202 99212	Straightforward	Minimal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 self-limited or minor problem 	Minimal or None	Minimal risk of morbidity from additional diagnostic testing or treatment
99203 99213	Low	Low <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 or more self-limited or minor problems; or 1 stable, chronic illness; or 1 acute, uncomplicated illness or injury 	Limited <i>(Must meet the requirements of at least 1 of the 2 categories)</i> Category 1: Tests and documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any combination of 2 from the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of prior external note(s) from each unique source*; Review of the result(s) of each unique test*; Ordering of each unique test* or Category 2: Assessment requiring an independent historian(s) <i>(For the categories of independent interpretation of tests and discussions of management or test interpretation, see moderate or high)</i>	Low risk of morbidity from additional diagnostic testing or treatment.

Table 2: Levels of Medical Decision Making (MDM) – continued

Elements of Medical Decision Making

Code	Level of MDM (Based on 3 out of 3 Elements of MDM)	Number and Complexity of Problems Addressed at the Encounter	Amount and/or Complexity of Data to be Reviewed and Analyzed <i>*Each unique test, order or document contributes to the combination of 2 or combination of 3 in Category 1 below.</i>	Risk of Complications and/or Morbidity or Mortality of Patient Management
99204 99214	Moderate	Moderate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 or more chronic illnesses with exacerbation, progression, or side effects of treatment; or • 2 or more stable, chronic illnesses; or • 1 undiagnosed new problem with uncertain prognosis; or • 1 acute illness with systemic symptoms; or • 1 acute, complicated injury 	Moderate <i>(Must meet the requirements of at least 1 out of 3 categories)</i> <p>Category 1: Tests, documents, or independent historian(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any combination of 3 from the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of prior external note(s) from each unique source*; • Review of the result(s) of each unique test*; • Assessment requiring an independent historian(s) <p>or</p> <p>Category 2: Independent interpretation of tests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent interpretation of a test performed by another physician/other qualified health care professional (not separately reported); <p>or</p> <p>Category 3: Discussion of management or test interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of management or test interpretation with external physician/other qualified health care professional/appropriate source (not separately reported) 	Moderate risk of morbidity from additional diagnostic testing or treatment <i>Examples only:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescription drug management • Decision regarding minor surgery with identified patient or procedure risk factors • Decision regarding elective major surgery without identified patient or procedure risk factors • Diagnosis or treatment significantly limited by social determinants of health

Table 2: Levels of Medical Decision Making (MDM) – continued

Elements of Medical Decision Making

Code	Level of MDM (Based on 3 out of 3 Elements of MDM)	Number and Complexity of Problems Addressed at the Encounter	Amount and/or Complexity of Data to be Reviewed and Analyzed <i>*Each unique test, order or document contributes to the combination of 2 or combination of 3 in Category 1 below.</i>	Risk of Complications and/or Morbidity or Mortality of Patient Management
99205 99215	High	High <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 or more chronic illnesses with severe exacerbation, progression, or side effects of treatment; or 1 acute or chronic illness or injury that poses a threat to life or bodily function 	Extensive <i>(Must meet the requirements of at least 2 out of 3 categories)</i> <p>Category 1: Tests, documents or independent historian(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any combination of 3 from the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of prior external note(s) from each unique source*; Review of the result(s) of each unique test*; Ordering of each unique test*; Assessment requiring an independent historian(s) <p>or</p> <p>Category 2: Independent interpretation of tests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent interpretation of a test performed by another physician/other qualified health care professional (not separately reported); <p>or</p> <p>Category 3: Discussion of management or test interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion of management or test interpretation with external physician/other qualified health care professional/appropriate source (not separately reported) 	High risk of morbidity from additional diagnostic testing or treatment <i>Examples only:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drug therapy requiring intensive monitoring for toxicity Decision regarding elective major surgery with identified patient or procedure risk factors Decision regarding emergency major surgery Decision regarding hospitalization Decision not to resuscitate or to de-escalate care because of poor prognosis.

Table 3: Time Requirement Comparison for E/M Selection – Time Override

E/M Office or Other Outpatient CPT Code	Typical Face-to-Face Time (pre-2021)	Total Face-to-Face and Non-Face-to-Face Time (2021) Day of Encounter Only
New Patient		
99201	10 minutes	Code deleted
99202	20 minutes	15-29 minutes
99203	30 minutes	30-44 minutes
99204	45 minutes	45-59 minutes
99205	60 minutes	60-74 minutes
Established		
99211	5 minutes	Time component removed
99212	10 minutes	10-19 minutes
99213	15 minutes	20-29 minutes
99214	25 minutes	30-39 minutes
99215	40 minutes	40-54 minutes