

## 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>

*Independence Blue Cross 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.*

Independence Blue Cross offers products through its subsidiaries Independence Assurance Company, Independence Hospital Indemnity Plan, Keystone Health Plan East, and QCC Insurance Company — independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.