



Business of Medicine: The Importance of Billing and Shadow Billing

PREPARED BY DOCTORS NOVA SCOTIA | UPDATED 2022

Accurate billing and shadow-billing are critical

Fee-for-service physicians are paid for each insured service when billed correctly and in a timely manner, while those paid by alternative payment plan (APP) are required to shadow-bill clinical activity for accountability purposes.

Understanding payments received

MSI payments can be difficult to understand, making it difficult to know when payment for services has been made. Physicians can access MSI pay statements online. Go to www.msielink.ca and log-in with the six digits of their provider number as username, the physician will then be able to compare their business arrangement number(s) with work completed on each pay statement to reconcile their payments with their billings.

Shadow-billing

Physicians who shadow-bill must submit claims for all billable activities as outlined in the MSI [Physician's Manual](#) to fulfill the terms of their contract. Physicians may increase their income, be eligible for a top-up payment or receive payments in addition to their APP contract.

How to search MSI Physician's Bulletins

Keeping up with changes to billing codes and rules can be challenging. Here's how to search the 2014-present bulletins for key words related to fee codes.

Open the document ([click here](#)).

On your keyboard:

- Click <Ctrl+F> to reveal the search box
- Type a key word or phrase into the search box and press enter

This will return all mentions of the specific billing code through the search. To scroll through each mention, click on the down arrow in the search box.

Billing tips

The following tips aim to guide you with accurate billing/shadow-billing.

Bill for it all:

Make sure you are billing/shadow-billing for all insured clinical services that you provide to patients.

Stay informed:

[Subscribe](#) to and review new MSI [Physicians' Bulletins](#) for updates on changes to billing rules and fee values.

The right code for the right service:

Choose the code that reflects the work you do. For example, submitting a claim for an 03.03 office visit rather than an 03.03B complex care visit undervalues the work done, which reduces income/your ability to reach shadow-billing thresholds.

Submit your billings/shadow-billing promptly:

Holding and entering claims in batches can lead to increased errors/omissions or missing the 90-day submission deadline.

Details matter:

Enter all relevant details for each encounter (modifiers, time stamps, etc.) and ensure charts include all documentation required for that code.

Monitor regularly:

Regularly monitor for rejected claims and make necessary revisions and resubmit for payment.

If in doubt, reach out:

MSI can provide advice on how to bill a service encounter properly. Submit questions by [email](#) for reference and for audit purposes.

On-demand billing videos:

DNS has created [videos](#) from a recent billing seminar, divided by chapters, to support physician billing.

Need a helping hand?

Doctors Nova Scotia's physician advisors are ready to point you to resources to support your billing and shadow-billing practices.

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