

PRESS RELEASE – MARCH 1, 2006

The BTER Foundation, in its efforts to assist patients and therapists, announces the latest advances in reimbursement status for biotherapeutic medical procedures: CPT and ABC codes are available for requesting reimbursement from Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance.

Recommended CPT coding for maggot therapy is either:

97597 – “Removal of devitalized tissue from wounds(s), selective debridement, without anesthesia (eg, high pressure waterjet with/without suction, sharp selective debridement with scissors, scalpel and forceps), with or without topical application(s), wound assessment, and instruction(s) for ongoing care, may include use of a whirlpool, per session; total wound(s) surface area less than or equal to 20 square centimeters;”

or:

97598 – “Removal of devitalized tissue from wounds(s), selective debridement, without anesthesia (eg, high pressure waterjet with/without suction, sharp selective debridement with scissors, scalpel and forceps), with or without topical application(s), wound assessment, and instruction(s) for ongoing care, may include use of a whirlpool, per session; total wound(s) surface area greater than 20 square centimeters.”

ABC codes have been designated for medicinal maggots, maggot therapy and leech therapy:

EAACT – “Medicinal disinfected maggots.”

NAAFT – “Maggot therapy application, each site. Applying medicinal maggots and bandaging a patient's body part or region to clean nonhealing wound(s).”

NAAFU – “Maggot therapy removal, each site. Removing medicinal maggots from a patient's body part or region and rebandaging his or her wound(s).”

NAAFR – “Leech therapy Applying medicinal leeches to a patient's body part, region or full body to drain replanted or transplanted tissue engorged with venous blood.”

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At this time, there is no specific HCPCS code for medicinal maggots. Use either the ABC code (EAACT) or use HCPCS code A9270 (“non-covered item”). Be sure to include the following details: 1) the specific clinical indications (justification) for their use; 2) their cost (which exceeds the reimbursement provided for the procedure itself); and 3) the fact that the product has marketing clearance (if the product being used is, indeed, legally marketed for the medical treatment).

The BTER Foundation has been working for the past 4 years with patient advocates and product manufacturers to standardize reimbursement for maggot and leech therapy. Significant advances in this area have been seen only since 2004, when the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) granted marketing clearance to two producers of these medical devices.

The BTER Foundation continues working on its mission to support patient care, medical education and research in the fields of maggot therapy and biotherapeutic medicine.

More information about the BTER Foundation can be found at: www.BTERFoundation.org
More information about CPT codes can be found at: www.ama-assn.org
More information about ABC codes can be found at: www.ABCcodes.com.
More information about HCPCS codes and CMS can be found at: www.cms.hhs.gov

Disclaimer: The BTER Foundation is not a coding expert. The information in this press release should not be misconstrued as coding advice for any specific patient or clinical situation. This information is provided as a service only, and represents an accumulation of the best advice available to the Foundation, as provided by outside coding experts. Please feel free to comment on this information. Please feel free to update us in this area with whatever expert information or experience you may have to contribute.

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