

**IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT THIS REIMBURSEMENT POLICY**

Providers are responsible for submission of accurate claims requests. This reimbursement policy is intended to ensure that you are reimbursed based on the code that correctly describes the procedure performed. This and other reimbursement policies may use CPT, CMS or other coding methodologies from time to time. References to CPT or other sources are for definitional purposes only and do not imply any right to reimbursement.

Coding methodology, clinical rationale, industry-standard reimbursement logic, regulatory issues, business issues and other input is considered in developing reimbursement policy.

This information is intended to serve as a resource regarding the reimbursement policy for the services described and is not intended to address every aspect of a reimbursement situation. Accordingly we may use reasonable discretion in interpreting and applying this policy to services being delivered in a particular case. Further, the policy does not cover all issues related to reimbursement for services rendered to enrollees as legislative mandates, the provider contract documents, and the enrollee's benefit coverage documents, may supplement or in some cases supersede this policy. Finally, systems logic or set up may prevent the loading of this policy onto different claims platforms in exactly the same way; however, we strive to minimize these variations.

ACN Group Inc. (OptumHealth Physical Health), may modify this policy from time to time by publishing a new version of the policy on its Website; however, the information presented in this policy is believed to be accurate and current as of the date of publication.

Modifier –AT	
<b>Type</b>	Reimbursement
<b>Number</b>	0050
<b>Approved by</b>	
Reimbursement and Technology Committee Quality Improvement Committee	
<b>Approval Date</b>	
August 9, 2007 October 11, 2007	
Description	
This policy describes OptumHealth Physical Health methodology and requirements for the reimbursement of services appended by modifier -AT.	
Audience	
<b>Targeted Population</b>	This policy applies to all Medicare products, all network and non-network health care professionals. This includes non-network authorized and percent of charge contract providers.* <i>*Fee schedule/provider contract/client contract may supersede.</i>
Policy	
<b>Policy Statement</b>	<b>Modifier – AT: Acute Treatment</b>

**Description:** The –AT modifier should be used by chiropractic physicians when reporting service 98940, 98941, 98942 to Medicare, when patients are in the active/corrective treatment phases of care.

**OptumHealth Physical Health Guidelines:** The –AT modifier is required for claims submitted for services rendered under Medicare contracts. Medicare claims for CPT codes 98940, 98941, 98942 that are not appended by the –AT modifier will be interpreted as “maintenance” or “custodial” services. Maintenance/custodial services are not reimbursable.

### Edit Sources

OptumHealth Physical Health sources its Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Chiropractic CPT code payment policy methodology to methodologies used and recognized by third party authorities. The sources used to determine if a CPT code is reimbursable are:

American Medical Association. *Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) Professional Edition*, 2010

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) National Coverage Policy and current Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) Policy Manual(s) <http://www.cms.hhs.gov>

2009 Chiropractic Coding Solutions Manual. American Chiropractic Association; Arlington, VA

Grider DJ. *Coding With Modifiers: A Guide to Correct CPT and HCPCS Level II Modifier Usage*, 2006; AMA Press

### Background Summary

A modifier provides the means by which the reporting health care practitioner can indicate that a CPT descriptor code (service or procedure), which has been performed, has been altered by a specific circumstance or in some way *without changing the definition of the CPT code*. Modifiers increase the specificity of certain CPT codes.

CPT code modifiers are comprised of two digits, either numeric (Level I; AMA) or alphabetic (Level II; CMS), and are listed after a procedural code by a hyphen e.g., 98943-51. Modifiers are typically recorded in Section 24 (D) on the CMS-1500 form.

Modifiers have two different applications: (1) to identify circumstances that significantly alter a service or procedures where reimbursement will be affected; and (2) for informational purposes without impact on reimbursement. For the purposes of this policy, the applications of select Level I (AMA) and Level II (CMS) modifiers have been assessed for their impact on reimbursement determinations.

CPT coding modifiers are used to communicate that something is *atypical* about a particular claim. Circumstances where the use of a modifier include, if the service: (a) has been increased or decreased; (b) has both a professional and technical component; (c) only part of the service was performed; (d) an independent or adjunctive procedure was performed; (e) if unusual events occurred; and (f) is expected to be denied as not appropriate and/or necessary.

### Definitions

<b>Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) Codes</b>	A set of codes, description and guidelines intended to describe the procedures and services performed by physicians and other health care providers. Each procedure or service is identified with a five-digit code.
<b>CPT Modifiers</b>	These are two digit (numeric or alphabetic) codes that are appended to CPT codes to properly identify a procedure or service has been altered due to specific circumstances, and the procedure or service was not changed in its definition or code.

**References and Resources**

**References**

1. American Medical Association. *Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) Professional Edition, 2010*
2. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), *Medicare Benefit Policy Manual, Chapter 15* <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/manuals/Downloads/bp102c15.pdf>
3. Grider DJ. *Coding with Modifiers: A Guide to Correct CPT and HCPCS Level II Modifier Usage*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2006; [www.ama-assn.org](http://www.ama-assn.org)
4. American Chiropractic Association (ACA), Professional Resources, Clinical (Medical) Documentation: The Key to Reimbursement for Chiropractic Claims [http://www.amerchiro.org/content\\_css.cfm?CID=1080](http://www.amerchiro.org/content_css.cfm?CID=1080)
5. 2009 Chiropractic Coding Solutions Manual. American Chiropractic Association; Arlington, VA
6. *ChiroCode DeskBook*, 18<sup>th</sup> ed., 2010. <http://www.chirocode.com>

**History/Updates**

Approval Date:	Revision History: 10/9/09, 4/8/10
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