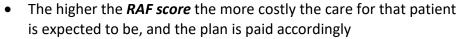# Provider Education
Quality Documentation & Coding Pearls
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MEDICARE RISK ADJUSTMENT & VALIDATION

Medicare Risk Adjustment: Predicting Future Cost

- Medicare adjusts payments to advantage health plans based on the **health status** of its members
- The health status is determined by the **conditions** that are diagnosed during a face-to-face visit with a provider
- Certain acute and chronic conditions are assigned a **risk adjustment factor (RAF)** based on the predictive financial cost of that condition
- The higher the **RAF score** the more costly the care for that patient is expected to be, and the plan is paid accordingly

RAF score: Resets Yearly

- A patient's **RAF score** depends on what conditions the patient has
- The **RAF score** relies on a complete assessment of all conditions and coding to the highest level of specificity
- All chronic conditions must be reassessed and documented **every calendar year**

Validation: Making it Very Clear

- Documentation must be clear to the reviewer and **free of contradictions**
- Document a chronic condition as **active** even if it is well controlled and the patient is asymptomatic
- Document a condition as **historical** once it has resolved or is no longer present
- Only bill for a condition if you clearly document that you **monitored, assessed, evaluated or treated** that condition on that date of service
- Do not diagnose a condition if you are trying to rule it out

CODING TIPS

There are specific descriptive words that can affect code selection and RAF

IF	THINK
Chest pain	*Angina*
Dysrhythmia	*Atrial fib*
Leg pain	*PAD*
Wound	*Ulcer*
Underweight	*Malnutrition*
Obesity	**Morbid obesity**
Numbness	**Polyneuropathy**
Bruising	**Senile purpura**
Limb loss	**Amputation**
Depression	**Major depression**
Hepatitis	**Chronic hepatitis**
Asthma	**COPD**
Bronchitis	**Chronic bronchitis**
Long term oxygen use	**Chronic respiratory failure**
Pacemaker in situ	**Complete AV block or A.Fib**
Right sided weakness	**Hemiplegia**
Renal insufficiency	**Chronic kidney disease**
Problematic drug use	**Drug abuse or dependence**
Blood clot	**Pulmonary embolism or DVT**

Don't forget to VALIDATE: DIAGNOSIS, STATUS & PLAN

Questions? Call (480) 499-8700 ext. 8205 or email provider.education@azprioritycare.com

Revised 01/29/19