Bone Marrow Aspirate for Grafting

March 12, 2015

Question:
Our surgeon performed a bone marrow aspirate from the iliac crest when performing a spinal fusion. The surgeon gave me CPT code 38230, but I am wondering if this is correct. Can you illuminate this for me?

Answer:
While the aspiration of bone marrow is separately reportable, CPT code 38230 is not the correct code. This code describes the aspiration of bone marrow for transplantation, such as in a bone marrow transplant in an immunosuppressed patient. The correct code, when the aspirate is harvested from a separate surgical site via a separate incision for the intent of a fusion is CPT code 38220, Bone marrow; aspiration only. Append modifier 59 to indicate current procedure service.