The Physician Alliance
Dedicated to Improving Michigan's Health

Low Back Pain – Alternatives in Diagnosis

Injury Based Diagnosis Codes:	Underlying Conditions with Low Back Pain as a symptom:
Low Back Sprain	Osteoarthritis/ Osteomyelitis/Osteoporosis
Low Back Strain	Discitis
Herniated or ruptured discs	Cauda Equina Syndrome
Radiculopathy	Endometriosis
Sciatica	Rheumatoid Arthritis
Skeletal Irregularities	Sacroiliitis
Spinal Stenosis	Spondylitis/Spondyloarthritis
Spondylolisthesis	Tumors/Cancer
Traumatic Injury	Kidney Stones

Low Back Pain M54.5_ — *Actually it's not!*

- **Is the low back pain (LBP) a symptom of another disease/diagnosis?**
  - Diagnoses that can be related to low back pain frequently require medication strictly for the side effect of low back pain. The symptom requires treatment separate from the originating diagnosis. Treatment required for the symptom of a diagnosis is considered a separate diagnosis and can have its own plan of care but cannot be the primary diagnosis for the visit.
  - When prognosis is not completely known, the symptom can be used as the diagnosis, *but* only until a diagnosis is confirmed.

- **Is the LBP an injury (sprain or strain) in which the muscles, fascia and/or tendon of the lower back are involved?**
  - ICD-10 codes for injuries, poisonings and other consequences of external causes require an additional 7th digit. These 7th digits are episode-of-care descriptors:
    - A = Initial encounter: The patient is receiving active treatment for an injury, poisoning, or other external cause.
    - D = Subsequent encounter: The patient is receiving routine care during a period of healing or recovery.
    - S = Sequela: The patient is receiving care for a complication and/or conditions arising as a direct result of an injury. An example of a sequela is a scar resulting from a burn.

Most common ICD-10 codes for the above listed on reverse side

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Diagnosis	ICD-10 Code (Diagnosis Code)
Low Back Sprain*	S33.5XX__ (A, D, or S)
Low Back Strain*	S39.012__ (A, D, or S)
Cauda Equina Syndrome	G83.4
Discitis, lumbar region	M46.46
Endometriosis	N80.0 – N80.6, N80.8, N80.9
Fibromyalgia	M79.7
Herniated or ruptured discs	M51.26
Intervertebral disc degeneration	M51.35, M51.36, M51.37
Kidney Stones	N20.0
Osteoarthritis, unspecified	M19.90
Osteomyelitis, lumbar region	M46.26
Osteoporosis	M81.0
Radiculopathy	M54.15, M54.16, M54.17
Rheumatoid Arthritis	M06.9
Sacroiliitis	M46.1
Sciatica	M54.3_
Skeletal Irregularities	R93.7
Spinal Stenosis	M48.06, M48.07, M48.08
Spondylolisthesis	M43.16, M43.17, M43.18
Spondylolysis lumbar region	M43.06
Spondylopathy	M46.90
Spondylosis	M47.9
Traumatic Injury/Tumors/Cancer	Please refer to the ICD-10 coding manual for these codes.

*7th digit extensions for injuries in above list example: *Low Back Strain, Initial Encounter = S39.012A*

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