

## Clarifying Medicare Audiology Billing Services: Audiology and OTO-Techs

Recently, the Academy has received numerous questions from members on Medicare audiology billing and what services audiology/ otolaryngology-technicians (oto-techs) can bill. In response, resources on the Academy's website have been developed to help to clarify this issue.

([http://www.entnet.org/Practice/Medicareupdates.cfm#CP\\_JUMP\\_149730](http://www.entnet.org/Practice/Medicareupdates.cfm#CP_JUMP_149730)). A frequently asked question and answer is provided below, followed by a summary of information provided on our website.

*This is meant to be a guide to assist with questions and not a definitive source. For a definitive list of what procedures audiology/ oto-tech's can provide and bill, contact your Medicare Administrative Contractor because Medicare allows them to determine what services oto-techs can perform and the qualifications needed, based on state and/or local law.*

### **Q: What Services Can Oto-Techs Provide and Bill?**

**Answer:** A physician orders a comprehensive audiometry threshold evaluation and speech recognition test (CPT 92557), but wonders if their certified audiology technician or oto-tech can perform and bill for this? In most states, the answer is no, they cannot. According to Medicare, audiology/oto-techs cannot bill Medicare for 92557 because there is no separate professional component (-26)/ technical component (TC) breakout where the technician would be able to bill for the TC. However, qualified professionals that have their own Medicare NPI, such as an Audiologist, may bill for this.

- In June 2010, CMS released *MedLearn Matters* 6447, URL <http://www.cms.gov/MLN MattersArticles/downloads/MM6447.pdf>, which clarified the Medicare policy on billing for audiology services. CMS indicated that qualified technicians, including those trained in the Academy's oto-tech program, can only perform diagnostic audiology tests (under direct physician supervision) that have a technical and professional component. In such cases, the technicians can only perform the technical component of the test. This revised policy took effect September 30, 2010.

Table 1 shows a list of Audiology codes, produced by CMS. Tests that have a split professional and technical component (TC/ -26) most likely do not likely require an audiologist. The full list of Audiology codes can be found here,

[http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Billing/TherapyServices/Downloads/Audiology\\_Codes.pdf](http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Billing/TherapyServices/Downloads/Audiology_Codes.pdf).

For codes that do have a split, an oto-tech (or other practitioners that furnishes the technical component) may perform the technical component of the service under direct physician supervision (note that for CPT codes with a split, the physician, non-physician practitioner or audiologist must perform the professional component of the tests). **However, as mentioned previously, be sure to check with your local Medicare contractor for guidelines.**

The medical record must contain the name and professional identity of the technician who actually performed the service. The physician must order the audiological diagnostic testing specifically, listing each test individually. **Again, check with your local Medicare contractor for guidelines.**

***Q: What's happens to the oto-techs who are well-trained through our Academy's oto-tech program?***

***Answer:*** Oto-techs can still perform the technical component of diagnostic audiology tests that have a professional and technical component. The physician must detail the specific tests the technician must perform, and provide direct supervision. The services can be billed under the name and NPI number of the physician. Contact your local Medicare contractor's Medical Director to determine the specific diagnostic tests that technicians can perform and for which you will be reimbursed.

*The Academy realizes this is a complex issue and other questions may arise, including those involving services performed by an Audiologist. The Academy has several resources available for members to help them navigate Medicare's audiology billing requirements, including a newly revised Audiology FAQ available on our website at:*

[http://www.entnet.org/Practice/Medicareupdates.cfm#CP\\_JUMP\\_149730](http://www.entnet.org/Practice/Medicareupdates.cfm#CP_JUMP_149730).

*The Academy also provides a coding hotline to members for specific questions about coding which can be reached Monday through Friday 7 am- 4 pm MST at 800-584-7773. Additional questions can be submitted to the Health Policy team at [healthpolicy@entnet.org](mailto:healthpolicy@entnet.org).*

**Table 1**

CPT Code	Description	Split PC/TC?
92540	ENG Testing	Yes
92541	Spontaneous Nystagmus Test, w/Gaze & Fixation Nyst..	Yes
92542	Positional Nystagmus Test, Minimum, 4 Positions, w...	Yes
92543	Caloric Testing	Yes
92544	Optokinetic Nystagmus Test, Bidirectional, Foveal...	Yes
92545	Oscillating Tracking Test, w/Recording	Yes
92546	Sinusoidal Vertical Axis Rotational Testing	Yes
92547	Use of vertical electrodes	No
92548	Computerized Dynamic Posturography	Yes
92550	Tympanometry and Reflex Threshold	No
92552	Pure Tone Audiometry (Threshold); Air Only	No
92553	Pure Tone Audiometry (Threshold); Air & Bone	No
92555	Speech Audiometry Threshold	No
92556	Speech Audiometry Threshold; w/Speech Recognition	No
92557	Comprehensive Audiometry Threshold Eval & Speech R..	No
92567	Tympanometry (Impedance Testing)	No
92568	Acoustic reflex testing, threshold	No
92570	Acoustic Immittance, Tympanometry	No
92579	Visual Reinforcement Audiometry (VRA)	No
92601	Diagnostic analysis of cochlear implant, patient younger...	No
92602	...subsequent reprogramming	No
92603	Diagnostic analysis of cochlear implant, age 7 years +...	No
92604	...subsequent reprogramming	No

92561	Bekesy audiometry, diagnostic	No
92562	Loudness balance test, alternate binaural or monaural	No
92563	Tone decay test	No
92564	Short increment sensitivity index (SISI)	No
92565	Stenger test, pure tone	No
92571	Filtered speech test	No
92572	Staggered spondaic word test	No
92575	Sensorineural acuity level test	No
92576	Synthetic sentence identification test	No
92577	Stenger test, speech	No
92582	Conditioning play audiometry	No
92583	Select picture audiometry	No
92584	Electrocochleography	No
92585	Auditory Evoked Potentials, Evoked Response	Yes
92586	Auditory Evoked Potentials for Evoked Response; Limited	Yes
92587	Evoked Otoacoustic Emissions; Limited	Yes
92588	Evoked Otoacoustic Emissions; Comprehensive/Dx	Yes
92620	Evaluation of central auditory function, with report; initial	No
92621	...Each additional 15 minutes	No
92625	Assessment of tinnitus (includes pitch, loudness matching..	No
92626	Evaluation of auditory rehabilitation status; first hour	No
92627	...Each additional 15 minutes	No
92640	Diagnostic analysis with programming of auditory brain...	No