



IDENTIFY PATIENTS AT RISK FOR SUICIDE:

Tips for Supporting Depression Screening

DEPRESSION is the illness most commonly associated with suicide and is a significant risk factor for suicide. (United States Department of Health & Human Services, 2019). Screening for depression can help identify patients who are at risk for suicide, and a large proportion of patients who are identified with risk for suicide may have depression. Routinely screening for depression is a preventative measure that can help identify and connect patients with needed mental health care.

Behavioral Health Screening

Code	Description
CPT 96127	Administration, scoring, and documentation of a brief behavioral or emotional screening instrument, including measures used for depression, anxiety, suicide risk, substance use, ADHD, etc.
G0444	MEDICARE patients only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If SYMPTOMS are reported prior to routine screening, use CPT 96127. • If NO SYMPTOMS are reported prior to routine screening, use code G0444 instead of CPT 96127.
G8431 with HD Modifier	Add-on code when screening is POSITIVE for clinical depression
G8510 (with HD Modifier, Replaces 99420)	Add-on code when screening is NEGATIVE for clinical depression
CPT 96161	Administration, scoring, and documentation of a care-giver health risk assessment standardized instrument (e.g., health hazard appraisal), including screening for maternal depression during a well-child visit. Billed using the child's ID number.

CPT Code 96127 was created in 2015 in response to the Affordable Care Act's mandate for mental health treatment to be included in benefits provided by insurance. CPT 96127 is used for brief emotional/behavioral assessment, with scoring and documentation, per standardized instrument (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2017).

CPT 96127 is used for brief assessment/screening for symptoms related to depression, anxiety, suicide risk, substance use, ADHD, etc. This code can be entered for each screener administered, for up to **four** screeners per patient per visit. (Maheu, M. M., 2016). The corresponding ICD-10 code for CPT 96127 is Z13.89 – encounter for screening for other disorder.

- If screening result is **POSITIVE**, also use **G8431 (with HD modifier)**
- If screening result is **NEGATIVE**, also use **G8510 (with HD modifier)**

Which Insurance Companies Reimburse for CPT 96127?

Many major health insurance companies reimburse for CPT code 96127, including Aetna, Cigna, Medicare, and United Health Care. It is good practice to consult directly with insurance companies if you have questions about billing for CPT 96127.

Special Considerations for Clients with Medicare

- Routine (annual) screening (e.g., depression) when **NO symptoms are present** prior to screening – Use G0444 instead of 96127.
- Screening for depression when **symptoms ARE present** – Use **CPT 96127**.

Screening Caregivers

CPT 96161 is used for administration, scoring, and documentation of a caregiver-focused risk assessment using a standardized instrument, such as screening for maternal depression during a well-child visit. Bill this code using the child's ID number.

REFERENCES

United States Department of Health & Human Services. (2019). Does depression increase the risk for suicide? Retrieved from <https://www.hhs.gov/answers/mental-health-and-substance-abuse/does-depression-increase-risk-of-suicide/index.html>

Maheu, M. M. (2016, October, 22). 96127 CPT Code: Are you maximizing your telehealth billing? Telebehavioral Health Institute. Retrieved from <https://telehealth.org/blog/96127-cpt-code/>

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2017). Standardized screening/testing fact sheet for primary care pediatricians: Developmental/behavioral/emotional. Retrieved from https://www.aap.org/en-us/Documents/coding_factsheet_developmentalscreeningtestingandEmotionalBehvioraassessment.pdf