

Policy 1206

NHP/NHIC ~ Assistant Surgeon Policy

Purpose: This Network Health Plan/Network Health Insurance Corporation (NHP/NHIC) policy describes services provided by Assistant Surgeons that are reimbursable services and the method for determining reimbursement amounts for Assistant Surgeon services.

Policy and Procedure: An assistant at surgery is a physician who actively assists the physician performing a surgical procedure. Assistant Surgeons are considered medically necessary for some surgical procedures. Codes eligible for reimbursement for an assistant at surgery are codes designated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) located on the National Physician Fee Schedule Relative Value File (NPFS).

A status code in the Assistant Surgeon column on the NPFS indicates when an assistant at surgery is allowed or not allowed. Status code indicator “0” indicates that payment restriction for assistants at surgery applies to the procedure unless supporting documentation is submitted to establish medical necessity. Status code indicator “1” indicates that statutory payment restriction for assistants at surgery applies to the procedure and assistant at surgery may not be paid. Status code indicator “2” indicates that payment restriction for assistants at surgery does not apply to the procedure and assistant at surgery may be allowed. Status code indicator “9” indicates concept does not apply.

Only one Assistant Surgeon will be reimbursed for each eligible procedure. The Assistant Surgeon must be a participating provider with NHP/NHIC.

Modifier	Definition
80	Assistant Surgeon
81	Minimum Assistant Surgeon
82	Assistant Surgeon (when qualified resident surgeon not available)
AS	Physician assistant, nurse practitioner, or clinical nurse specialist services for assistant at surgery

Reimbursement for Assistant Surgeon claims will be processed by NHP/NHIC as follows:

- 20 percent of the surgical allowed amount for M.D. or D.O. Assistant Surgeons designated by modifier 80, 81, 82 or AS.
- 10 percent of the surgical allowed amount for a non-physician practitioner (Nurse Practitioners (N.P.) and Physician Assistants (P.A.) designated by modifier 80, 81, 82 or AS.
- If an Assistant Surgeon submits multiple procedure codes, multiple procedure reductions and Assistant Surgeon reductions will apply. Refer to NHP/NHIC’s “Multiple and Endoscopic Procedures Policy.”

Reimbursement for Assistant Surgeon during Cesarean Section:

Only a non-global cesarean section delivery CPT code 59514 or 59620 (without antepartum or postpartum components) is a reimbursable service when submitted with an appropriate assistant surgeon modifier.

Global cesarean section CPT codes (59510, 59515, 59618, and 59622 submitted by an assistant surgeon will be reimbursed using the non-global cesarean section codes 59514 and 59620 as follows:

- 59510 reimbursed using 59514
- 59515 reimbursed using 59514
- 59618 reimbursed using 59620
- 59622 reimbursed using 59620

If you have any questions whether or not an Assistant Surgeon would be considered an eligible expense for a certain procedure, please contact the NHP/NHIC Customer Service Department at 920-720-1300 or 1-800-826-0940.

This policy is not a guarantee of coverage or payment. The claim(s) will be denied if it does not meet with all the terms and provisions of the members Certificate of Coverage. Actual benefits will be determined when the claim(s) or bill(s) are submitted to NHP/NHIC. NHP/NHIC reserves the right to periodically review and update all claims policies and procedures.

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