Pathology and Laboratory Individual Exercises

1. A routine finger stick was used to obtain blood as a specimen for a lab test. How should this service be reported?

   36416  Obtaining a specimen for a lab test is not bundled into the test itself and may be separately reported. See March 1998 CPT Assistant. A finger stick is a “capillary blood specimen”. It is reported using 36416, not 36415, the routine venipuncture code.

2. A pregnant patient presented to her OB/GYN’s office for her first trimester exam. The OB/GYN ordered the practice’s standard “obstetric panel” to be performed by the OB/GYN’s in-office lab. The panel included the following tests: hepatitis B surface antigen, rubella antibody, qualitative syphilis test, RBC antibody screen, ABO blood typing and Rh (D) blood typing. How would these services be reported?

   87340, 86762, 86592, 86850, 86900 and 86901  It would not be appropriate to report the obstetric panel (80055) because that panel must include a CBC (85025 or 85027) and either an automated WBC or manual WBC (85004; 85007 or 85009) in addition to the other tests listed above. Consequently, the individual tests must be reported separately.

3. An ED physician ordered the following lab tests: potassium, sodium, ionized calcium, chloride, creatinine, glucose, BUN and carbon dioxide. How would these lab tests be reported?

   80047  CPT code 80048 would not be appropriate because the calcium test was specified as ionized.

4. What is the difference between qualitative and quantitative drug testing?

   A qualitative test identifies whether or not particular drug(s) are present. A quantitative test identifies the how much of the drug(s) present.

5. A 17 year-old male presents to the ED unconscious. The family suspects that the boy either drank an excessive amount of vodka or took some of his mother’s prescription Phenobarbital. Blood was drawn and sent to the lab for testing to determine whether either
substance was present in the patient’s blood. The lab ran a single drug screen procedure using a multiple drug class chromatographic method (consisting of one stationary phase and one mobile phase). How would these lab test(s) be reported?

80100 This is a qualitative test. A single code is reported because one procedure tests for the presence of drugs from both drug classes.

6. Same patient as above. The screen revealed the presence of Phenobarbital. Because the patient remained unconscious, the ED physician ordered a follow-up lab test to determine the level of Phenobarbital in the patient’s blood. How would the follow-up lab test be reported?

80184 This is a quantitative test.

7. A physician performs a drug screen using a multiplexed screening kit to detect eight different drugs classes (chromatography was not utilized). How should the lab test(s) be reported?

80104 Per the AMA, this code should be reported for a specific drug screen that is a qualitative analysis by multiplexed method for 2-15 drugs or drug classes (multidrug screening kit).

8. A physician ordered a peripheral vein stimulation panel involving a baseline measurement of the level of renin in the blood and a second renin test after the administration of an evocative agent. How should these lab services be reported?

80417 This code includes both lab tests.

9. A pathologist performed a limited clinical pathology consultation (including a written report) without reviewing the patient’s history and medical record. What is the appropriate code for the pathologist’s professional services?

80500

10. An automated urinalysis with microscopy was performed. The test revealed the presence of bacteria. The urine specimen was then cultured and a quantitative colony count was obtained. How should these lab services be reported?

81001, 87086

11. A patient presented to the hospital for a biopsy of two separate breast lesions – one on the right breast and one on the left breast. The physician excised both lesions and sent each
specimen (in separately labeled containers) to the pathologist for a consult during the surgery. The pathologist prepared two tissue blocks from the left breast specimen and one block from the right breast specimen. Five frozen sections were microscopically examined from the left breast specimen – two from the first block and three from another block. Four frozen sections were microscopically examined from a single block from the right breast specimen. How should the pathologist’s professional services be reported?

88331-26x2, 88332-26. Per CPT Assistant July 2000, multiple, separately submitted specimens may be received during surgery for frozen section examination for diagnosis or immediate evaluation, resulting in the use of multiple units of 88331. 88331 is used once per specimen not per surgery.

12. A physician ordered a lab test to determine the amount of Chloride present in two different urine specimens from the same patient. The first specimen was obtained in the morning and the second specimen was obtained in the afternoon. How should these lab services be reported?

82436, 82436-91  The code is reported twice because two separate specimens were analyzed.

13. A lab test was performed to identify nucleic acids. The test included molecular diagnostic procedures involving both reverse transcription and nucleic acid transfer. An interpretation and report was produced. All services were provided in a freestanding physician owned lab. How should these services be reported?

83902, 83897, 83912  Molecular diagnostic services are coded based on the procedure(s) performed. An interpretation and report on the testing is also reported separately.

14. In preparation for a transfusion, the lab thawed three units of fresh frozen plasma. How should these services be reported?

86927x3

15. Cytopathology slides prepared from a cervical specimen were manually scored using the Bethesda System. The scoring was done by lab personnel under physician supervision. The results were positive. The same physician also prepared a written interpretation. How should these services be reported?

88164, 88141