

# Closing Gaps & Meeting Metrics

## Coding Tips & Best Practices

December 2020

### Rheumatoid Arthritis

#### What is rheumatoid arthritis?

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a chronic inflammatory disease that can cause joint pain and damage throughout the body.

RA is an autoimmune disorder that occurs when the immune system mistakenly attacks body tissues affecting the lining of joints and causing painful swelling that can result in bone erosion and joint deformity. RA can also damage a wide variety of body systems, including the skin, eyes, lungs, heart and blood vessels.



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### Symptoms

Diagnosing RA in the early stages helps members get the treatment needed as soon as possible. RA symptoms may include:

- Morning stiffness in the joints for at least one hour.
- Swelling or fluid around three or more joints.
- At least one swollen area in the wrist, hand or finger joints.
- Arthritis involving the same joint on both sides of the body (e.g., both wrists or both hips).
- Rheumatoid nodules, which are firm lumps in the skin of some people with RA. They are usually in pressure points of the body, most commonly the elbows.
- Higher than normal levels of rheumatoid factor in the blood.
- Changes in the hands and wrists typical of rheumatoid arthritis, with destruction of bone around the affected joints, as shown by X-rays. These changes tend to happen later in the disease.

If members have any of the first four items on the above list, they must have them for at least six weeks for the doctor to consider diagnosing RA.

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## HEDIS Measures

The National Committee for Quality Assurance has defined a quality measure specific to disease-modifying anti-rheumatic Drug (DMARD) therapy for RA.

- **Ages:** 18 years and older
- **Product:** Medicare  
*(This measure retired for the Commercial and Medicaid product lines effective fiscal year 2020)*
- **Documentation requirements for compliance:** Members who had at least one ambulatory prescription dispensed for a DMARD during the measurement year
- **Members excluded from the measure:** Diagnosis of HIV, pregnancy

The two ways to identify members who received a DMARD are by claim/encounter and pharmacy data.

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## Managing RA

### Monitor

- Signs
- Symptoms
- Disease progression or regression

### Evaluate

- Subjective and objective findings
- Described pattern of affected joints

### Assess or Address

- Affected joints, laterality and current status
- Labs and tests performed to confirm diagnosis
- If only suspected, document sign and symptoms

### Treat

- Therapies
- Treatment used to control symptoms and/or joint damage
- DMARDs (medications that slow the progression of joint damage from RA)
- Referrals to:
  - ✓ Specialists
  - ✓ Disease management programs
  - ✓ Diagnostic testing
  - ✓ Labs



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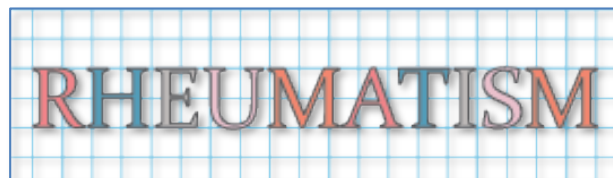
## Diagnosis Codes Associated with Rheumatoid Arthritis

Description	ICD-10-CM
Other rheumatoid arthritis with Rhesus (Rh) factor of multiple sites	M05.89
Rheumatoid arthritis with Rh factor unspecified	M05.9
Rheumatoid arthritis without Rh factor of unspecified site	M06.00
Rheumatoid arthritis without Rh factor of multiple sites	M06.09
Other specified rheumatoid arthritis of multiple sites	M06.89
Rheumatoid arthritis unspecified	M06.9

## Correcting Misdiagnoses

How can a diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis that has been submitted in error be corrected?

- ✓ Submit a corrected claim to us for the date of service on which the diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis was originally submitted.
- ✓ On the corrected claim, include any other diagnoses captured on this date of service since any diagnoses submitted will replace those on the original claim.



## Earn CEUs through Coding Webinars

We offer on-demand webinars that provide detail about how to support diagnoses per Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services guidelines. These courses are updated for 2020 and are eligible for 1.5 continuing education unit credits each.

Topics include:

- Atrial fibrillation
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- Major depression
- Mental health
- Rheumatoid arthritis



Register today at [availity.com](https://www.availity.com)<sup>1</sup>.

## References

- [arthritis.org/diseases/rheumatoidarthritis](https://www.arthritis.org/diseases/rheumatoidarthritis)
- [cms.gov/Medicare/Coding/ICD10](https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Coding/ICD10)
- [ncqa.org/wpcontent/uploads/2019/07/](https://www.ncqa.org/wpcontent/uploads/2019/07/)



<sup>1</sup>Availity LLC is a multi-payer joint venture company. For more information, visit [availity.com](https://www.availity.com).