

### [CMS Appears to have Answered WBC Differential Reflex Testing & Coding Question](#)

For many years the question on how do laboratories "handle/code" a WBC automated differential that needs to be reflexed to a manual WBC differential" has plagued the laboratory community. According to several reputable laboratory resources, it is now believed that CMS has answered this question during the April 25th CMS Lab Open Door Forum by referring to recent changes to the National Correct Coding Policy Manual.

At this recent meeting CMS noted the following guidance in the current National Correct Coding Policy Manual, Chapter 10, Pathology/Laboratory Services:

- This section essentially prohibits billing for a reflexed manual WBC diff performed as a result of an abnormal or flagged automated WBC diff.
- *"If, after a test is ordered and performed, additional related procedures are necessary to provide or confirm the result, these would be considered part of the ordered test. For example, if a patient with leukemia has a thrombocytopenia, and a manual platelet count (CPT 85032) is performed in addition to the performance of an automated hemogram with automated platelet count (85027), it would be inappropriate to report codes 85032 and 85027 because the former provides a confirmatory test for the automated hemogram and platelet count (85027). As another example, if a patient has an abnormal test result and repeat performance of the test is done to verify the result, the test is reported as one unit of service rather than two."*

Based on CMS's conservative approach.... [WHEN CAN YOU BILL A MANUAL WBC DIFF with a CBC?](#)

- *"the only way a CBC and manual WBC differential may be billed is when a physician specifically orders a CBC without auto diff (85027) and a manual WBC diff (85007)"*
- *In summary: CMS will only pay for both tests if the physician knows ahead of the time of order that both tests are medically reasonable and necessary... and orders the testing as stated above". Remember that a CCI edit prohibits and 85007 from being paid in addition to 85025, based on the fact that the manual WBC diff duplicates the automated WBC diff included in the 85025.*