

# Character 5: Approach

In an effort to aid Health Information Management Coding Professionals for ICD-10, the following is provided with an educational intent.

The fifth character defines the approach, or the technique used to reach the procedure site. There are seven different approach values used in the MEDICAL AND SURGICAL section to define the approach.



Approach

**Open:** Cutting through the skin or mucous membrane and any other body layers necessary to expose the site of the procedure.

**Percutaneous:** Entry, by puncture or minor incision, of instrumentation through the skin or mucous membrane and any other body layers necessary to reach the site of the procedure.

**Percutaneous Endoscopic:** Entry, by puncture or minor incision, of instrumentation through the skin or mucous membrane and any other body layers necessary to reach and visualize the site of the procedure.

**Via Natural or Artificial Opening:** Entry of instrumentation through a natural or artificial external opening to reach the site of the procedure.

**Via Natural or Artificial Opening Endoscopic:** Entry of instrumentation through a natural or artificial external opening to reach and visualize the site of the procedure.

**Via Natural or Artificial Opening With Percutaneous Endoscopic Assistance:** Entry of instrumentation through a natural or artificial external opening and entry, by puncture or minor incision, of instrumentation through the skin or mucous membrane and any other body layers necessary to aid in the performance of the procedure.

**External:** Procedures performed directly on the skin or mucous membrane and procedures performed indirectly by the application of external force through the skin or mucous membrane.

*Coding Clinic* is the official resource and authority for ICD-10 coding rules and conventions.

This coding tip sheet was developed by the CHIA Coding and Data Quality Committee as an educational resource 2013.