

# What Is a CPT<sup>®</sup> Consumer Friendly Descriptor and CPT<sup>®</sup> Clinician Descriptor?

Two new sets of AMA-created code descriptors—the CPT<sup>®</sup> Consumer Friendly Descriptors and CPT<sup>®</sup> Clinician Descriptors were first made available to consumers via the *CPT<sup>®</sup> Data File*, *CPT<sup>®</sup> Enhanced Data File*, and *CPT<sup>®</sup> Link* (formerly *CPT<sup>®</sup> Developer's Tool Kit*) in 2012 for the 2013 code set. They continue to be a staple of the data files and CPT Link.

## **CPT<sup>®</sup> Consumer Friendly Descriptors**

Translate each code descriptor from the official CPT code set into language that is easily understood by the average patient and/or his or her caregiver. The objective is to simplify the highly technical CPT code descriptors into something more patient-focused and patient-friendly. The Consumer Friendly Descriptors may prove useful in any situation where clear communication in non-technical language is important.

Consumer Friendly Descriptors also support the following two key objectives of the Meaningful Use Stage 2 of the Medicare and Medicaid Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Programs:

- To provide patients clinical summaries for each office visit
- To provide patients the ability to view, download, and transmit their health information to a third party, such as eligible professionals, eligible hospitals, or critical access hospitals.

Consumer Friendly Descriptors can assist in realizing the full potential of personal health records by making the information reported with CPT codes understandable for the patients. Additional use cases include: patient portal of EHRs, EMRs or hospital information management systems; discharge summaries; payers' explanation of benefits.

A sample of a translation of an official CPT code descriptor to a Consumer Friendly Descriptor follows:

### **Official CPT code descriptor**

**30130** - *Excision inferior turbinate, partial or complete, any method*

### **CPT<sup>®</sup> Consumer Friendly Descriptor**

**30130** - *Removal of nasal air passage*

## **CPT<sup>®</sup> Clinician Descriptors**

Describe clearly and specifically the procedure or service performed by a physician or qualified health care provider at the point of care. The purpose of the Clinician Descriptors is to describe accurately clinical events rather than billable events. The Clinician Descriptors will also benefit those health care providers and workers who have little or no knowledge of coding by providing a better, more clinical understanding of the CPT code set.

Development of CPT<sup>®</sup> Clinician Descriptors often generates more than one clinician descriptor for each official CPT code descriptor.

A sample of a translation of an official CPT code descriptor to Clinician Descriptors follows:

**Official CPT code descriptor**

**30130** - *Excision inferior turbinate, partial or complete, any method*

**CPT<sup>®</sup> Clinician Descriptors**

**30130** - *Complete excision of inferior turbinate*

**30130** - *Partial excision of inferior turbinate*

And like the Consumer Friendly Descriptors, Clinician Descriptors support the Meaningful Use Stage 2 of the Medicare and Medicaid Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Programs. In this instance, the objective is to allow eligible professionals, eligible hospitals, or critical access hospitals who transition or refer a patient to another care setting or provider to create and transmit a summary care record.

Clinician Descriptors have the potential to be used for defining a subset of medical procedures and services within an electronic health record, documenting medical procedures and services, conducting research, and reporting clinical and statistical data.