



**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE**

Definition

Consults

A consultation is a type of evaluation and management service provided at the request of another physician, other qualified health care professional, or appropriate source to recommend care for a specific condition or problem. A physician or other qualified health care professional consultant may initiate diagnostic and/or therapeutic services at the same or subsequent visit.

A “consultation” initiated by a patient and/or family, and not requested by a physician, other qualified health care professional, or other appropriate source (eg, non-clinical social worker, educator, lawyer, or insurance company), *is not* reported using the consultation codes. The consultant’s opinion and any services that were ordered or performed must also be communicated by written report to the requesting physician, other qualified health care professional, or other appropriate source.

Coding tip

What Documentation Is Required?

In order for a service to be considered a consultation, the following criteria must be met and documented (the three r’s):

- *A **request** for a consultation, along with the need for a consultation, must be documented by the consultant in the patient's medical record and included in the patient's medical record of the requesting practitioner.*
- *An opinion is **rendered** by the consulting practitioner. This opinion, along with any other service provided, is documented in the patient's health record.*
- *A written **report** of the consultant's findings and opinion or recommendation is communicated back to the requesting practitioner.*