SVS members: Are you getting all the reimbursement money to which you are entitled? Are you leaving that money on the table, instead of in your practice?

“Correct coding is key in vascular surgery,” said Teri Romano, MBP, CPC, CMDP, one of the faculty leaders of the upcoming SVS 2019 Coding & Reimbursement Workshop. “If you code correctly, you will increase revenue.”

The workshop, plus an optional course on Evaluation & Management Codes, will be Sept. 20 to 21 at the Hyatt Rosemont, just minutes from O’Hare International Airport. The location is a change from previous years.

Correct coding must include the supporting documentation. Payers commonly ask for the dictation on operative notes, to ensure that everything the surgeon has coded is present in the documentation, she said.

Vascular surgery is a very complex specialty, requiring a large number of codes. Moreover, vascular surgery has seen the most code changes in the past five to six years, compared with other surgical specialties, she said.

Both she and course leader Dr. Sean Roddy highly recommend that at least one person in a practice be knowledgeable about coding. Incorrect coding costs a surgeon both time and money, decreasing reimbursement and causing delay.

She used EVAR as an example of the impact of accurate coding: EVAR, a procedure with a number of billable codes to include for reimbursement. “If you don’t include some or all of those codes, you lose money every time you submit an EVAR for payment,” she said.

Other important topics covered in the workshop include:

- Bundling, used for a number of comprehensive procedures. “If no one in the practice knows that additional procedures — such as imaging and catheterization — can be billed, they’ll lose money,” she said.
- When to separate billable items
- Reviewing changes from previous years
- Understanding the Global Surgical Package
Applying modifiers for streamlined reimbursement

She also recommended using coding software, calling it “expensive but essential.” A surgeon will cover that expense with “one month of good coding,” she said, adding the same is true of the Coding & Reimbursement Workshop. “People tell us that what they learn within two hours will return their cost of the course in one month,” she said. For more details, including fees, visit vsweb.org/Coding19.

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