

# Modifier 78

Reimbursement Policy ID: RPC.0069.2100

Recent review date: 02/2025

Next review date: 11/2025

*AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana reimbursement policies and their resulting edits are based on guidelines from established industry sources, such as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the American Medical Association (AMA), state and federal regulatory agencies, and medical specialty professional societies. AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana reimbursement policies are intended as a general reference and do not constitute a contract or other guarantee of payment. (Insert plan name) may use reasonable discretion in interpreting and applying its policies to services provided in a particular case and may modify its policies at any time.*

*In making claim payment determinations, the health plan also uses coding terminology and methodologies based on accepted industry standards, including Current Procedural Terminology (CPT); the Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS); and the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-10-CM), and other relevant sources. Other factors that may affect payment include medical record documentation, legislative or regulatory mandates, a provider's contract, a member's eligibility in receiving covered services, submission of clean claims, and other health plan policies, and other relevant factors. These factors may supplement, modify, or in some cases supersede reimbursement policies.*

*This reimbursement policy applies to all health care services billed on a CMS-1500 form or its electronic equivalent, or when billed on a UB-04 form or its electronic equivalent.*

## Policy Overview

When an unplanned return to the operating or procedure room occurs during the postoperative period of another procedure, modifier 78 must be appended to the appropriate surgical codes for proper reimbursement.

## Exceptions

Modifier 78 is not appropriate for Place of Service (POS) 11 (office).

## Reimbursement Guidelines

AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana recognizes claims submitted with Modifier 78 when an unplanned related return to the operating room occurs during the global period of the original procedure by the same provider or same Tax Identification Number (TIN). Modifier 78 is appended to claims with a global surgical period of 010 or 090 days as determined by the CMS Fee Schedule. (See reimbursement policy RPC.0012 for Global Surgical Package and Split Surgical Care).

Definitions

Modifier 78-Unplanned Return to the Operating/Procedure Room

The 78 modifier is used to indicate that another procedure was performed during the postoperative period of the initial procedure (unplanned procedure following the initial procedure).

Edit Sources

- I. Current Procedural Terminology (CPT), and associated publications and services.
- II. International Classification of Diseases,10th Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-10).
- III. Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS).
- IV. Louisiana Medicaid Fee Schedule(s).

Attachments

N/A

Associated Policies

RPC.0012.2100 Global Surgical Package & Split Surgical Care

Policy History

04/2024	Preamble revised
11/2023	Reimbursement Policy Committee Approval
08/2023	Removal of policy implemented by AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana from Policy History section
01/2023	Template revised <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preamble revised</li><li>• Applicable Claim Types table removed</li><li>• Coding section renamed to Reimbursement Guidelines</li><li>• Associated Policies section added</li></ul>
	Precedes Act 319