



MEMO

To: Physician Executive Committee

From: Judy Moreau, VP of Mid-Revenue Cycle

Date: 10/31/2023

Re: Use of Hashtags/Symbols in the Medical Record

It has recently come to my attention that providers are using hashtags in the legal medical record when documenting new diagnoses or listing diagnoses. The use of hashtags and other symbols within the body of the medical record are problematic for the computer assisted coding software used throughout Trinity. Because many of these symbols are used when writing software code, the coding engine is confused by the symbol and cannot suggest the appropriate diagnosis code or Diagnosis Related Group (DRG). Hashtags are also problematic because they have gained traction in social media as a means of calling attention to a person, website, etc., and therefore are not appropriate for use in our legal health record.

When a provider creates a list of diagnoses, there is no need to use any type of differentiator in front of the diagnosis. By listing just the diagnoses, the provider can save keystrokes and time. Numbers are an acceptable alternative to Hashtags and symbols if the provider wants to use a differentiator; however, we have received feedback that providers are not comfortable using numbers because it feels as if they are ranking their diagnoses. Coders and payors would not look at the numbers associated with any diagnosis to determine the sequencing of the diagnoses as there are specific coding rules that guide this practice.

The HIM, Coding and CDI teams appreciate your support in addressing this issue to maintain the integrity of our record as well as the efficiency of the software that we license. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at jmoreau@trinity-health.org.