

## CIOX CODING TIP

# Watch Your Tongue



Intuitively the base of the tongue body part value would be the tongue. Right? Actually, the base of the tongue is considered anatomically to be part of the oropharynx as cited in *Coding Clinic, Second Quarter, 2016, p. 19-20 and 28-29*. When referencing the Body part key, under oropharynx the coder is directed to the body part, pharynx.

Therefore, when assigning ICD-10-PCS codes for base of the excisions for therapeutic or diagnostic purpose (base of tongue biopsy), pharynx would be the correct body part value.

In addition, if the term base of tongue “resection” is performed, such as after a previously performed glossectomy, resection would not be utilized for this procedure because the entire pharynx was not resected. This example, would still be coded to excision of the pharynx. If this procedure was performed using an open technique the correct procedure code would be OCBM0ZZ [Excision of Pharynx, Open Approach]

It is up to the coding professional to construct procedure codes using PCS definitions. In the above base of tongue resection example the surgeon is essentially performing a partial resection of the pharynx. Refer to *ICD-10-PCS Official Guidelines For Coding And Reporting 2019: A11*

## Guideline Alert

# A11

Many of the terms used to construct PCS codes are defined within the system. It is the coder’s responsibility to determine what the documentation in the medical record equates to in the PCS definitions. The physician is not expected to use the terms used in PCS code descriptions, nor is the coder required to query the physician when the correlation between the documentation and the defined PCS terms is clear.

Example: When the physician documents “partial resection” the coder can independently correlate “partial resection” to the root operation Excision without querying the physician for clarification.

