CODING TIPS
SIGNS, SYMPTOMS, AND ILL-DEFINED CONDITIONS

PRINCIPAL DIAGNOSIS
Do not code a sign of symptom as principal diagnosis if:
1. Sign or symptom is related to established diagnosis
2. Sign or symptom is integral to established diagnosis

Do code a sign or symptom as principal diagnosis if:
1. No established diagnosis is present
2. Alphabetic index directs
3. Pt admitted for sole purpose of treatment symptom with no treatment directed at underlying diseases (dehydration in gastroenteritis, admitted for rehydration only)

ADDITIONAL DIAGNOSIS
Code signs and symptoms as additional diagnosis only if they are not integral to underlying disease and their presence makes a difference in the severity of the patient’s condition and/or care.

ABNORMAL FINDINGS
Only report if listed as a diagnosis by physician

ILL-DEFINED CONDITIONS
Never use when a more definitive diagnosis is available.