

Title: **Assistant at Surgery Services**

Policy Number: RP-001

Version Number: 2026.07.27

Medicare Advantage: PA, WV, DE, NY

Commercial: PA, WV, DE, NY

Claim Type: CMS 1500

Version Effective: July 27, 2026

Originally Effective: August 1, 2016

History Versions: [Click Here → History](#)

**Disclosure:** The purpose of this Reimbursement Policy is to document our payment guidelines for those services covered by a member's medical benefit plan and ensure you are reimbursed based on the codes that correctly describe the health care services provided. Reimbursement Policies do not provide guidance on whether a service is a covered benefit under the members' contract. Benefit determinations are based in all cases on the applicable benefit plan contract language and applicable medical policies. Should there be any conflicts between Reimbursement Policy and the member's benefit plan, the member's benefit plan will prevail. Additionally, health care providers (facilities, physicians, and other professionals) are expected to exercise independent medical judgment in providing care to members. Reimbursement Policy is not intended to impact care decisions or medical practice. This Reimbursement Policy is intended to serve as a guide as to how the plan pays for covered services, however, other factors may influence payment and, in some cases, may supersede this policy. The provider should consult their network provider agreement for further details of their contractual obligations. The policy is applicable to designated markets either entirely, or partially, as indicated within the policy. Policy designation of claim type is based on how the provider is contracted with the Plan.

## Description:

This policy directs how the plan reimburses for an assistant at surgery who actively assists the physician performing a surgical procedure. The assistant is a physician or non-physician provider (NPP) who meets the Plan eligibility guidelines.

## Reimbursement Guidelines:

### Commercial

The Plan will reimburse 16 percent of the fee schedule amount otherwise applicable for the global surgery, for assistant at surgery services performed by a physician and 13.6 percent for his/her employed physician assistant (PA), certified registered nurse practitioner (CRNP), nurse practitioner (NP), clinical nurse specialist (CNS) or certified nurse midwife (CNM). PAs, NPs and CNSs must report their assistant at surgery services using their assigned NPI.

Note: Modifier AS must be appended to the claim line when reporting assistant surgery performed by an employed PA, CRNP, NP, CNS and CNM.

### Medicare Advantage

The Plan will reimburse 16 percent of the fee schedule amount otherwise applicable for the global surgery, for assistant at surgery services performed by a physician and 13.6 percent for his/her employed physician assistant (PA), certified registered nurse practitioner (CRNP), nurse practitioner (NP) or clinical nurse specialist (CNS). PAs, NPs and CNSs must report their assistant at surgery services using their assigned NPI.

Note: Modifier AS must be reported when billing assistant at surgery services.

Note: Delaware reimbursement references Chapter 12 of the Medicare Claims Processing Manual.

## Coding:

| Modifier | Definition                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AS       | Physician assistant, certified registered nurse practitioner, nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist or certified nurse midwife services for assistant at surgery |
| 80       | Assistant surgery                                                                                                                                                        |
| 81       | Minimum assistant surgery                                                                                                                                                |
| 82       | Assistant, no resident                                                                                                                                                   |

## References:

- CMS online Manual, Pub. 100-04. Chapter 12

## Related Plan Policies:

Refer to the following Medicare Advantage Medical Policies for additional information:

- N-28: Assistant Surgery Eligibility Criteria

Refer to the following Commercial Medical Policies for additional information:

- S-16: Assistant Surgery Eligibility Criteria

Refer to the following Reimbursement Policy for additional information:

- RP-035: Correct Coding Guidelines

**Policy Update History:**

|          |                                                                                         |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9 / 2023 | Added modifier definition section. Administrative review no changes in policy direction |
| 3 / 2025 | Administrative review no changes in policy direction                                    |
| 7 / 2026 | Administrative review no changes in policy direction                                    |

# Highmark Reimbursement Policy Bulletin



HISTORY VERSION

**Bulletin Number:** RP-001

**Subject:** Assistant at Surgery Services

**Effective Date:** August 1, 2016

**End Date:**

**Issue Date:** March 3, 2025

**Revised Date:** March 2025

**Date Reviewed:** February 2025

**Source:** Reimbursement Policy

**Applicable Commercial Market**

PA ☒ WV ☒ DE ☒ NY ☒

**Applicable Medicare Advantage Market**

PA ☒ WV ☒ DE ☒ NY ☒

**Applicable Claim Type**

UB ☐ 1500 ☒

➔ A checked box indicates the policy is applicable to that market either entirely, or partially, as indicated within the policy.

Reimbursement Policy designation of Professional or Facility application is based on how the provider is contracted with the Plan. This Policy supersedes direction provided in Bulletins prior to the effective date of this policy.

## REIMBURSEMENT GUIDELINES:

An assistant at surgery is a physician or non-physician (NPP) who meets the Plan eligibility guidelines and actively assists the physician in charge of a case in performing a surgical procedure.

### Commercial

The Plan will reimburse 16 percent of the fee schedule amount otherwise applicable for the global surgery, for assistant at surgery services performed by a physician and 13.6 percent for his/her employed physician assistant (PA), certified registered nurse practitioner (CRNP), nurse practitioner (NP), clinical nurse specialist (CNS) or certified nurse midwife (CNM).

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**Note:** Modifier AS must be reported when billing assistant at surgery services.

**Note:** Delaware reimbursement references Chapter 12 of the Medicare Claims Processing Manual.

**ADDITIONAL BILLING INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES:**

PAAs, NPs and CNSs must report their assistant at surgery services using their assigned NPI.

**DEFINITIONS:**

| Modifier | Definition                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AS       | Physician assistant, certified registered nurse practitioner, nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist or certified nurse midwife services for assistant at surgery |
| 80       | Assistant surgery                                                                                                                                                        |
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**RELATED POLICIES:**

Refer to the following Commercial Medical Policies for additional information:

- S-16: Assistant Surgery Eligibility Criteria

Refer to the following Medicare Advantage Medical Policies for additional information:

- N-28: Assistant at Surgery Services

Refer to the following Reimbursement Policies for additional information:

- RP-035: Correct Coding Guidelines

**REFERENCES:**

- CMS online Manual, Pub. 100-04. Chapter 12

**POLICY UPDATE HISTORY INFORMATION:**

|          |                                                                                         |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6 / 2018 | Implementation                                                                          |
| 7 / 2020 | Added 13.6 percent reimbursement for all commercial PA, CRNP, CNM                       |
| 1 / 2022 | Added Delaware Medicare Advantage applicable to the policy                              |
| 9 / 2023 | Added modifier definition section. Administrative review no changes in policy direction |
| 3 / 2025 | Administrative review no changes in policy direction                                    |

# Highmark Reimbursement Policy Bulletin



HISTORY VERSION

**Bulletin Number:** RP-001

**Subject:** Assistant at Surgery Services

**Effective Date:** August 1, 2016

**End Date:**

**Issue Date:** September 11, 2023

**Revised Date:** September 2023

**Date Reviewed:** August 2023

**Source:** Reimbursement Policy

**Applicable Commercial Market**

PA ☒ WV ☒ DE ☒ NY ☒

**Applicable Medicare Advantage Market**

PA ☒ WV ☒ DE ☒ NY ☒

**Applicable Claim Type**

UB ☐ 1500 ☒

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**Note:** Modifier AS must be reported when billing assistant at surgery services.

**Note:** PAs, NPs and CNSs must report their assistant at surgery services using their assigned NPI.

**Note:** Delaware reimbursement references Chapter 12 of the Medicare Claims Processing Manual.

**DEFINITIONS:**

| Modifier | Definition                                                                                              |
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| 80       | Assistant surgery                                                                                       |
| 81       | Minimum assistant surgery                                                                               |
| 82       | Assistant, no resident                                                                                  |

**RELATED POLICIES:**

Refer to the following Highmark Commercial Medical Policies for applicable clinical information:

- S-16: Assistant Surgery Eligibility Criteria
- Z-10: Services of Physician Assistants

Refer to the following Highmark Commercial Medical Policies for applicable clinical information:

- N-28: Assistant at Surgery Services
- N-116: Services of Physician Assistants
- N-115: Clinical Nurse Specialist Services
- N-113: Nurse Practitioner Services

**ADDITIONAL BILLING INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES:**

- CMS online Manual, Pub. 100-04. Chapter 12

**POLICY UPDATE HISTORY INFORMATION:**

|          |                                                                                         |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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