

# Tackling the ICD-10-PCS Approaches

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There are only seven approach values in ICD-10-PCS, so one would think that selecting the correct approach value would be simple, but it's not! Let's take a closer look at these seven approaches and then walk through some challenging cases.

## Open (0)

- Definition: Cutting through the skin or mucous membrane and any other body layers necessary to expose the site of the procedure
- Example: Abdominal hysterectomy

## Percutaneous (3)

- Definition: Entry, by puncture or minor incision, of instrumentation through the skin or mucous membrane and/or any other body layers necessary to reach the site of the procedure
- Example: Needle biopsy of liver

## Percutaneous Endoscopic (4)

- Definition: Entry, by puncture or minor incision, of instrumentation through the skin or mucous membrane and/or any other body layers necessary to reach and visualize the site of the procedure
- Example: Knee arthroscopy

## Via Natural or Artificial Opening (7)

- Definition: Entry of instrumentation through a natural or artificial external opening to reach the site of the procedure
- Example: Foley catheter placement

## Via Natural or Artificial Opening Endoscopic (8)

- Definition: Entry of instrumentation through a natural or artificial external opening to reach and visualize the site of the procedure
- Example: Sigmoidoscopy

## Via Natural or Artificial Opening Endoscopic with Percutaneous Endoscopic Assistance (F)

- Definition: Entry of instrumentation through a natural or artificial external opening and entry, by puncture or minor incision, of instrumentation through the skin or mucous membrane and any other body layers necessary to aid in the performance of the procedure
- Example: Laparoscopic-assisted vaginal hysterectomy

## External (X)

- Definition: Procedures performed directly on the skin or mucous membrane and procedures performed indirectly by the application of external force through the skin or mucous membrane
- Example: Closed fracture reduction

## Case 1

Assign the code for an endobronchial ultrasound (EBUS) guided transbronchial biopsy of an intrathoracic lymph node.

Section	0	Medical and Surgical	
Body System	7	Lymphatic and Hemic Systems	
Operation	B	Excision: Cutting out or off, without replacement, a portion of a body part	
Body Part	Approach	Device	Qualifier
0 Lymphatic, Head			
1 Lymphatic, Right Neck			
2 Lymphatic, Left Neck			
3 Lymphatic, Right Upper Extremity			
4 Lymphatic, Left Upper Extremity			
5 Lymphatic, Right Axillary			
6 Lymphatic, Left Axillary			
7 Lymphatic, Thorax			
8 Lymphatic, Internal Mammary, Right			
9 Lymphatic, Internal Mammary, Left			
B Lymphatic, Mesenteric	0 Open	Z No Device	X Diagnostic
C Lymphatic, Pelvis	3 Percutaneous		Z No Qualifier
D Lymphatic, Aortic	4 Percutaneous Endoscopic		
F Lymphatic, Right Lower Extremity			
G Lymphatic, Left Lower Extremity			
H Lymphatic, Right Inguinal			
J Lymphatic, Left Inguinal			
K Thoracic Duct			
L Cisterna Chyli			
M Thymus			
P Spleen			

Let's build our code from the table above.

- Section: 0, Medical and Surgical
- Body System: 7, Lymphatic and Hemic Systems
- Root Operation: B, Excision
- Body Part: 7, Lymphatic, Thorax
- Approach: 4, Percutaneous Endoscopic
- Device: Z, No Device
- Qualifier: X, Diagnostic

**Final Code: 07B74ZX**

**Rationale:** The coder may be looking for the approach value 8, Via Natural or Artificial Opening Endoscopic, for this procedure; however, it is not present in this table. Careful review of the definition of approach value 8 reveals that procedures performed using this technique are performed within the orifice or tubular body part, without passing the lumen wall to get to a different body part. Since the wall of the bronchus is punctured and the scope is passed through the wall to reach the intrathoracic lymph node, the correct approach is 4, Percutaneous Endoscopic. A similar case was published in the *AHA Coding Clinic for ICD-10-CM and ICD-10-PCS* in 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2013, pages 111-112.

## Case 2

A melanoma is widely excised to the depth of the subcutaneous tissue and fascia of the right upper leg.

Section	0 Medical and Surgical			
Body System	J Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia			
Operation	B Excision: Cutting out or off, without replacement, a portion of a body part			
Body Part		Approach	Device	Qualifier
0 Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Scalp		0 Open 3 Percutaneous	Z No Device	X Diagnostic Z No Qualifier
1 Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Face				
4 Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Anterior Neck				
5 Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Posterior Neck				
6 Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Chest				
7 Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Back				
8 Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Abdomen				
9 Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Buttock				
B Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Perineum				
C Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Pelvic Region				
D Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Right Upper Arm				
F Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Left Upper Arm				
G Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Right Lower Arm				
H Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Left Lower Arm				
J Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Right Hand				
K Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Left Hand				
L Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Right Upper Leg				
M Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Left Upper Leg				
N Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Right Lower Leg				
P Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Left Lower Leg				
Q Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Right Foot				
R Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Left Foot				

Using the above table, we will construct our code.

- Section: 0, Medical and Surgical
- Body System: J, Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia
- Root Operation: B, Excision
- Body Part: L, Subcutaneous Tissue and Fascia, Right Upper Leg
- Approach: 0, Open
- Device: Z, No Device
- Qualifier: Z, No Device

**Final Code: 0JBL0ZZ**

**Rationale:** The coder may be looking for a device value of X, External, for this procedure; however, the definition of the External approach states that the procedure is performed on the skin and mucous membranes. Since the subcutaneous tissue and fascia is excised, using a wide excision, the correct approach value is 0, Open.

## References

AHA. *AHA Coding Clinic for ICD-10-CM and ICD-10-PCS*. 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2013, pages 111-112.

CMS. 2015 Code Tables and Index. <http://cms.hhs.gov/Medicare/Coding/ICD10/2015-ICD-10-PCS-and-GEMs.html>.

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