



# Resolving a Coding Challenge

The purpose of this job aid is to help health information management (HIM) professionals resolve coding challenges. It identifies resources and tools available to assist with coding challenges, the criteria to help you determine whether your question is appropriate for submission, and the mandatory elements to include when formulating questions for the Classifications eQuery coding question service.

## Step 1: Use all available resources to resolve a coding challenge

Resource	How it can help
ICD-10-CA and CCI alphabetical index and tabular list	Search the alphabetical index and tabular list in ICD-10-CA and CCI, including classification instructional notes in the tabular list (at the chapter, block, category and code levels).
<a href="#">Canadian Coding Standards</a>	Refer to the coding standards for direction in applying ICD-10-CA and CCI.
Canadian Coding Standards for Version 2022 ICD-10-CA and CCI — Addendum: Pandemics and Epidemics (COVID-19)	See the <a href="#">Codes and Classifications web page</a> .
<a href="#">iCODE</a>	Apply the problem-solving strategy tool.
Education products	For a list of all available educational resources, see the <a href="#">Education Roadmap</a> .
Tips for Coders	Tips released from spring 2021 onward: <a href="#">Codes and Classifications web page</a> .  Relevant tips released prior to spring 2021: See Appendix E — Education resources in the <i>Canadian Coding Standards</i> .
Job aids	See the <a href="#">Codes and Classifications web page</a> .
Bulletins	For a current list of relevant bulletins, see the <a href="#">Codes and Classifications web page</a> .
eQuery database	Search the eQuery database for similar questions.
Websites and/or reference material	Gain a general understanding of the disease, condition or intervention by consulting credible websites or other reference material.
Other health information management (HIM) professionals	Discuss the issue with a team member, community of coding practice or data quality group within your facility/jurisdiction.

If you are still unable to find your answer, see steps 2 and 3 before submitting a coding question to eQuery.



# Step 2: Determine whether your question meets submission criteria



### Questions that meet one or more of the following criteria will be answered:

- A disease, condition or intervention appears not to have an applicable ICD-10-CA or CCI code;
- A possible error is identified in ICD-10-CA/CCI, the Canadian Coding Standards or related resource content (e.g., bulletins, Tips for Coders, job aids, education products);
- A perceived gap is identified in the classifications (ICD-10-CA or CCI), Canadian Coding Standards or related resource content that could improve data collection if addressed;
- The question suggests a potential major/systemic data quality issue; and/or
- An issue of significant public interest or a strategic policy issue emerges (e.g., COVID-19, medical assistance in dying, opioids).



### Submit a question when

- You cannot resolve your coding challenge; and
- Your question meets one or more of these submission criteria.



### We will not provide answers to questions that

- Are based on hypothetical clinical scenarios;
- Ask about a diagnosis/intervention but do not include the pertinent clinical documentation for context;
- Ask for validation of code assignment without a specific issue identified;
- Can be answered using the clients' resources. Answers will not expand on information that should be acquired through training and/or by consulting available resources, such as ICD-10-CA and CCI, the Canadian Coding Standards, CIHI's education products, bulletins, Tips for Coders and job aids;
- Are related to incomplete, illegible or ambiguous documentation; and/or
- Are not within the scope of the Classifications and Terminologies expertise (e.g., questions that are clinical in nature or that should be answered by another program area).



### If you submitted a question that does not meet any of the submission criteria,

- You will be asked to provide clarification or will be referred to existing resources.



## Step 3: Formulate a coding question that meets the submission criteria

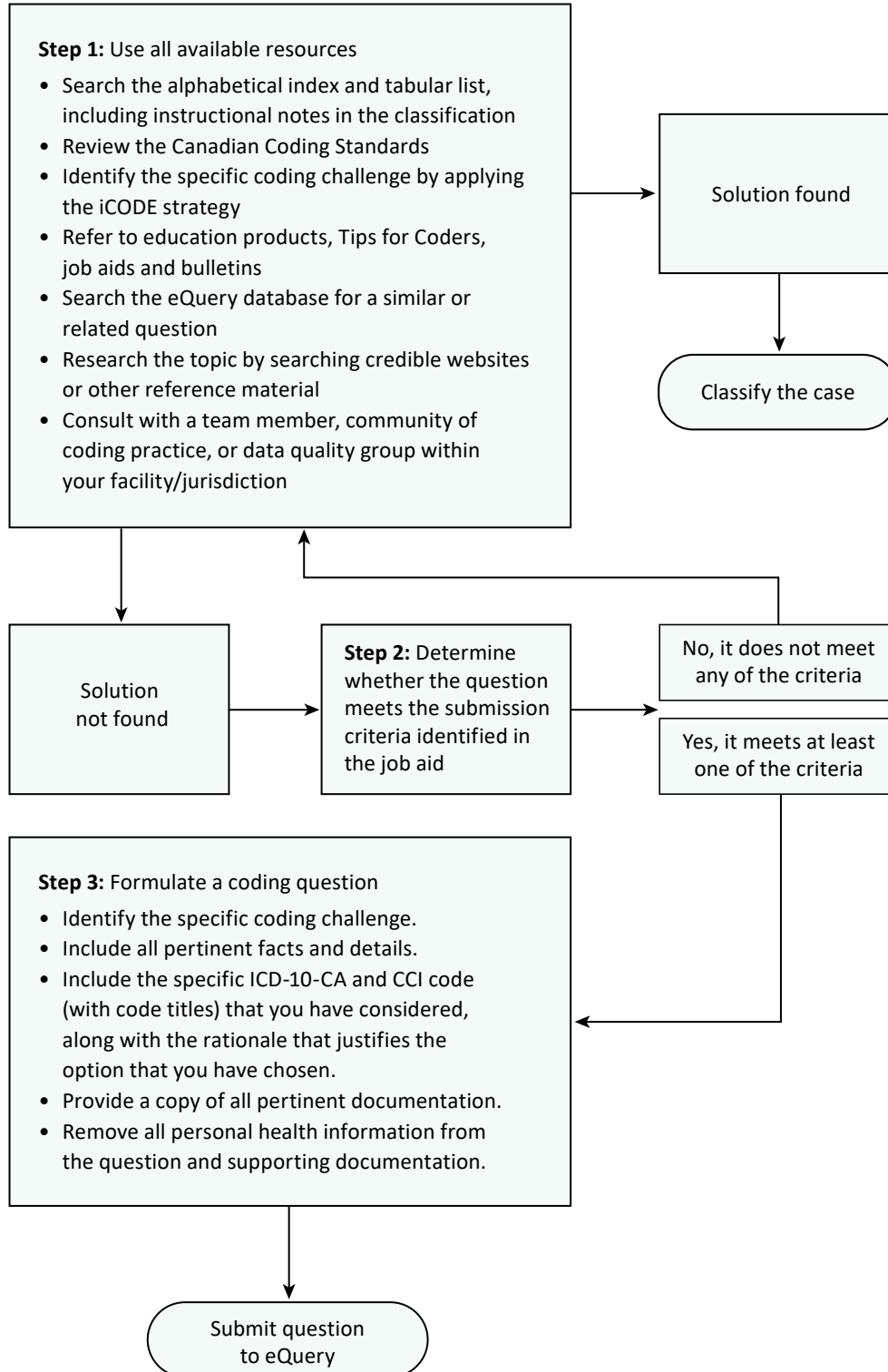
Important elements	Description
Specific coding challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Formulate a clearly articulated question that identifies a specific challenge.</li><li>• Spell out all abbreviations.</li></ul>
Facts and details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Include all pertinent facts, details and references used in researching the challenge.</li></ul>
Specific ICD-10-CA and CCI codes, and code titles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify the specific ICD-10-CA and CCI codes (including code titles) that you are considering, along with the rationale that justifies the option that you have chosen.</li><li>• List the resources you have used to find the best option.</li></ul>
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide a copy of all pertinent documentation (once personal health information has been removed) for the case related to your coding challenge so that we can provide direction on the classifications and/or coding standards as they apply to your specific case.</li></ul>
Free of personal health information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not include any personal health information (e.g., patient name, admission/discharge date, age, health card number, physician or facility name) within the body of the question or within the documents submitted.</li></ul>

For requests for ICD-10-CA- or CCI-related enhancements, please read about the [public submission process](#).

**Note:** Individual eQuery coding questions may be archived because the answers are no longer valid. When a new version of ICD-10-CA, CCI and the *Canadian Coding Standards* is released, only questions for the 3 previous fiscal years are kept in the database. Coding questions that have been archived will not be reposted. If you have a similar question that you would like answered, follow the above steps and submit a new question along with a copy of the supplementary documentation for a specific case.



## How to resolve a coding challenge





## Job Aid

### Text alternative for “How to resolve a coding challenge” flowchart.

Here are the steps to take to resolve a coding challenge.

Begin by using all available resources:

- Search the alphabetical index and tabular list, including instructional notes in the classification.
- Review the *Canadian Coding Standards*.
- Identify the specific coding challenge by applying the iCODE strategy.
- Refer to education products, Tips for Coders, job aids and bulletins.
- Search the eQuery database for a similar or related question.
- Research the topic by searching credible websites or other reference material.
- Consult with a team member, community of coding practice, or data quality group within your facility/jurisdiction.

If a solution is found, then classify the case.

If a solution is not found and the question meets the submission criteria identified in the job aid, then formulate a coding question.

If a solution is not found and the question does not meet the submission criteria, then check the available resources again.

To formulate a coding question that meets the criteria, you must

- Identify the specific coding challenge.
- Include all pertinent facts and details.
- Include the specific ICD-10-CA and CCI code (with code titles) that you have considered along with the rationale that justifies the option that you have chosen.
- Provide a copy of all pertinent documentation.
- Remove all personal health information from the question and supporting documentation.

Lastly, submit the question to eQuery.



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