

Anesthesia Q Modifiers

QUICK REFERENCE | QK, QX, QY, QZ & QS

Anesthesia Q modifiers help identify **medical direction**, **CRNA services**, and **monitored anesthesia care (MAC)**. For exam questions, start with who provided the service and whether a physician medically directed the case.

MODIFIER	WHAT IT MEANS	HOW IT MAY APPEAR IN A RECORD
QY	Anesthesiologist medically directs 1 CRNA.	Physician completes and documents medical direction requirements while directing one CRNA.
QK	Physician medically directs 2–4 concurrent anesthesia procedures involving qualified individuals.	An anesthesiologist medically directs three overlapping anesthesia cases, meeting the requirements for each.
QX	CRNA service with medical direction by a physician.	A CRNA administers anesthesia while an anesthesiologist provides qualifying medical direction.
QZ	CRNA service without medical direction by a physician.	A CRNA administers anesthesia without a physician providing qualifying medical direction.
QS	Monitored anesthesia care (MAC) service; informational modifier.	The record documents MAC. QS is added to the applicable anesthesia payment modifier; it does not replace it.

A simple way to remember them

QY / QK = physician side | QX / QZ = CRNA side
QS = MAC indicator, not a replacement for the payment modifier

What Might This Look Like in an Anesthesia Question?

Compare the physician claim, the CRNA claim, and the type of anesthesia.

1 One medically directed CRNA

An anesthesiologist directs one CRNA and documents the required activities.

Physician: **QY** | CRNA: **QX**

2 Three concurrent cases

One anesthesiologist directs three overlapping CRNA cases and meets the direction criteria.

Physician: **QK** | CRNAs: **QX**

3 No medical direction

A CRNA provides anesthesia without medical direction by a physician.

CRNA: **QZ**

4 MAC with a CRNA

A CRNA provides MAC without physician medical direction.

CRNA: **QZ + QS**

5 Anesthesiologist working alone

An anesthesiologist personally performs the anesthesia service.

Physician: **AA**, not a Q modifier

6 Five concurrent cases

A physician medically supervises five concurrent anesthesia cases.

Physician: **AD**, not QK

Medicare medical direction: the 7 requirements

1. Perform the pre-anesthetic evaluation
2. Prescribe the anesthesia plan
3. Participate in the most demanding aspects, if applicable
4. Ensure other steps are performed by qualified providers
5. Monitor anesthesia at frequent intervals
6. Remain physically present and available for emergencies
7. Provide indicated post-anesthesia care

Quick Tip: QK and QY require qualifying medical direction, not simply the anesthesiologist being nearby. **QS identifies MAC** and does not replace a payment modifier. Medical direction and facility supervision are not the same concept.

Medicare-focused educational reference (2026). Payer policies and state practice rules may differ.

Sources: CMS Claims Processing Manual, Ch. 12, §50; CMS APRN Billing; 42 CFR §415.110.