

Consultants' Corner

ICD-9 Is Dying Next Year

By Patty Harper

The diagnosis has been made! ICD-9 codes have barely over a year to live! Then, on October 1, 2014, there will be a total code set replacement. CMS and HHS have both made formal announcements in recent months that no further delays or push-backs will be issued. So, where does that put us as RHCs with ICD-10 Implementation? It probably puts us behind along with the majority of small and medium-sized practices. At least, we are in good company!

Last month, I spoke on ICD-10 at a state RHC meeting. When I polled the audience it became obvious that not only were most RHCs unaware of the impact of ICD-10, but they were also not yet fully up to speed on EHR implementation. There is a lot of work to be done in a relatively short amount of time. According to CMS's publication, **ICD-10 Timeline for Small-Medium Practices at a Glance**, we should have already made our needs assessment, communicated with our staff, engaged our vendors, and begun testing. We should also be on the verge of launching our training efforts as 2014 approaches. I told you that we were behind!

Remember:

- There are about 5 times more diagnosis codes in ICD-10--about 68,000.
- The code structure and formats are totally new and different. The codes are alpha-numeric and can contain up to 7 characters.
- More specificity is required. For example: laterality, severity of illness, anatomical site, trimester of pregnancy, and contributory factors.
- Code books are organized with new chapters.
- The mapping of ICD-9 to ICD-10 codes is not a one-to-one correlation. Sometimes, there are fewer codes from which to choose. Most of the time there are more codes to consider.
- ICD-10 codes will be used for dates of service beginning 10/1/2014. Systems will need to be able to handle both ICD-9 and ICD-10 codes for at least a year.

Here is a link to the CMS ICD-10 webpage:

<http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Coding/ICD10/index.html?redirect=/icd10>