

Dermatology Coding Alert

ICD-10 Outlook: AMA and Provider Feedback Impact ICD-10 Delay

Don't let changes catch your ophthalmology practice by surprise.

CMS hasn't made a final announcement about the proposed ICD-10 implementation delay from Oct. 1, 2013 to Oct. 1, 2014, but that doesn't mean all has been quiet on the diagnosis coding front. Plenty of professionals have taken the CMS "comment period" as an opportunity to sound off about the code set change.

With remarks coming from heavy-hitters like the American Medical Association (AMA), we thought you should hear some of the chatter that might sway the CMS decision.

Notice AMA's ICD-10 Displeasure

Not only did the AMA applaud CMS's proposed one year ICD-10 implementation delay, the agency went even further in a letter to CMS on the subject:

"We strongly urge CMS to further extend the ICD-10 deadline at a minimum to October 1, 2015," wrote AMA CEO **James L.**

Madara, MD. "A two-year delay of the compliance deadline for ICD-10 is a necessary first step."

That's not all: Now the AMA has taken additional steps to express its disillusionment with ICD-10. The agency announced that its House of Delegates adopted a policy to evaluate ICD-11 as a potential "alternative" to replace ICD-9, an AMA news release noted, as follows:

"ICD-10 coding will create unnecessary and significant financial and administrative burdens for physicians," said AMA President-elect **Ardis Dee Hoven, MD**, in a June 19 statement. "It is critical to evaluate alternatives to ICD-9 that will make for a less cumbersome transition for physicians and allow physicians to focus on their primary priority -- patient care. AMA voted today to consider ICD-11 as a possible alternative. The policy also asks the AMA and other stakeholders, such as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, to examine other options."

See What CMS Heard from You

CMS publically posted 135 comments from interested providers concerning the proposed implantation delay.

Pro: Change-weary commentators applauded the proposed ICD-10 delay, such as an Illinois biller who noted that her practice is "just catching our breath from 5010."

A California practitioner noted the extensive financial resources needed to implement the new code set, and said, "I want this postponement to come true. My patients need this postponement."

Con: Among the voices opposed to the ICD-10 delay, commentators pointed out the time and work already invested by professionals trying to comply with the deadline, as opposed to the procrastination of some individuals who will not be ready "no matter when we implement this."

A Texas coding auditor opposed the delay due to the need for ICD-10's expanded code set. "ICD-9-CM is outdated and broken," the commenter wrote. "The lack of specificity inherent in the code set results in the need for a number of backend processes (like auditing) to ensure coding compliance. I strongly believe that ICD-10-CM/PCS will result in benefits to both patients and providers."

Bottom line: CMS is currently reviewing all of the comments and will issue a follow-up notice as soon as it decides on whether to finalize the 2014 implementation date or not.