

Dermatology Coding Alert

Reader Question: Brush Up on ICD-10 Differences

Question: I've seen lots of specific examples of ICD-10 codes, but I think it would be helpful to know □ what are the basic differences between ICD-9 and ICD-10?

Georgia Subscriber

Answer: Understanding the following six main differences should make it easier when your practice makes the transition from ICD-9 to ICD-10 on Oct. 1, 2014:

1. ICD-10 codes are alpha numeric and up to seven characters in length; ICD-9 codes are only three to five characters.
2. ICD-10 has 21 chapters; ICD-9 has 17.
3. ICD-9's V and E codes are incorporated into the main classification in the ICD-10 code:
 - a. Placeholders (X) are required to hold places followed by additional characters.
 - b. Seventh characters are required for obstetrics, injuries, and external causes of injuries.
 - c. Post-operative complications will now be located specific to the procedure-specific body system.
4. ICD-10 will classify injuries first by specific site and then by type of injury. ICD-9 classified injuries by type.
5. ICD-10 includes full code titles for all codes, so it is not necessary to reference back to common fourth and fifth digit categories.
6. ICD-10 has combination codes for conditions and common symptoms or manifestations, for example E10.21 (Type 1 diabetes mellitus with diabetic nephropathy) and N30.01 (Acute cystitis with hematuria).