

Dermatology Coding Alert

Reader Question: Here's What You Can Do to Get Ready for ICD-10

Question: What should we be doing now to prepare for the ICD-10 transition?

South Carolina Subscriber

Answer: Your ICD-10 preparations should be focusing on both coding training and process changes at this point.

Don't wait until the last minute to get started with training. If you're unsure of where to start, get an ICD-10 book and begin browsing the codes to get a feel for them and their format. You may be surprised at the similarities to ICD-9. Many coders are happy to find that the new code system isn't as scary as they feared.

Good idea: Take the ICD-10 coding guidelines and assign a chapter to each person on your team. Have them discuss and compare the differences from ICD-9. This will help you start to narrow down the codes that will have the biggest impact in your agency.

Send at least one person from your office for ICD-10 training now. Then she can report back and share what she learns.

The coming transition to the ICD-10 code set isn't just about coding. The changes will impact every aspect of your agency processes.

To make certain you're ready for the Oct. 1, 2014 transition deadline, take a closer look at your current processes. Use the time between now and Jan. 1, 2014 to conduct a thorough assessment and identify any operational challenges your agency faces. This way, you can develop and implement solutions before the deadline.

As you begin to map out the steps in your transition, you'll need to establish the project structure, responsible parties, and highlight clinician and coding champions who can be assets. You should also create a budget. Be sure to include software upgrades, training needs, and productivity loss/gain.