

Dermatology Coding Alert

Reader Questions: Don't Fear ICD-10 Transition

Question: I've been told that ICD-10 will be nearly impossible to use because there are so many more codes □ is that true?

Arkansas Subscriber

Answer: ICD-10 does have many more codes than ICD-9 □ that much is true. But just as an increase in the number of words in a dictionary doesn't make it more difficult to use, the greater number of codes in ICD-10 doesn't necessarily make it more complex to use. More codes in ICD-10 may actually mean that you'll be able to code more accurately and more easily. However, documentation of the diagnoses in the medical record will need to be more detailed in order to determine the correct ICD-10 code to assign.

Perspective: When you're looking for a diagnosis code in ICD-9, you don't have to search the entire list of codes for the right code. The same holds true for ICD-10. Look to the Alphabetic Index and available electronic coding tools for help selecting the proper code.

Plus, ICD-10's improved structure and greater specificity will most likely make it easier to develop better computer-based coding tools that will help you locate codes with greater speed.