

Optometry Coding & Billing Alert

News You Can Use: See How CMS Addresses ICD-10 Delay

Users question ICD-9, too.

You know that Congress instituted an ICD-10 delay, but do you know what CMS plans to do about it?

Read on to see what your practice can count on, and what you will need to await to find out more, based on a recent CMS open door forum.

Wait for New Implementation Rule

"On April 1, 2014, the Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014 was enacted, and it says that the secretary may not adopt ICD-10 prior to Oct. 1, 2015," said CMS's **Chris Ritter** during the call. "Accordingly, the US Department of Health and Human Services expects to release an interim final rule in the near future that will include a new compliance date that would require the use of ICD-10 beginning Oct. 1, 2015. The rule will also require HIPAA covered entities to continue to use ICD-9-CM through Sept. 30, 2015."

When a caller asked whether that Final Rule will be issued on Aug. 1 (which is when the Inpatient Prospective Payment Final rule is due to be issued), CMS reps declined to answer. "Actually, the handling of ICD-10 is a separate issue," Ritter said. "The proposed IPPS rule does simply indicate that the recent legislation does delay ICD-10, and the secretary will be issuing a rule separately, but there will be a separate final rule for ICD-10. You can keep your eyes out for that."

Look for ICD-9, Testing Answers

Because ICD-9 updates have been frozen in anticipation of ICD-10 implementation in October 2014, you may be wondering about possible new changes to ICD-9.

When a caller asked whether the ICD-9 code freeze will stay in effect or whether new ICD-9 codes will be released in the wake of the ICD-10 delay, CMS's Diane Kovach responded that the answer has not yet been determined and that CMS will speak on that at a later date.

Testing on hold: Another caller asked for rationale regarding the cancellation of ICD-10 end-to-end testing, but CMS stressed that "the agency has committed to end-to-end testing" and that it will happen in 2015.

"Like everyone else that has done a lot of work to prepare for ICD-10 for the Oct. 1, 2014 date, we now have to turn our attention to reverting back to ICD-9 codes, so we'll be doing that for the coming months, and as soon as we have information available, which we hope will be in the not too distant future, we'll have information to you on end-to-end testing for next year," Kovach added.