

Outpatient Facility Coding Alert

ICD-10: Partial Code Freeze Should Lead to a Smoother Transition

Here's what the present scenario is.

Both the ICD-9 and ICD-10 code sets are currently under a partial freeze during the implementation of ICD-10, which can lead to many questions. Here's the latest on two issues of interest.

What Will Happen to Proposals for Changes During the Freeze?

The ICD-9 Coordination & Maintenance Committee will continue to meet twice a year during the freeze. At these meetings, the public will be allowed to comment on whether or not requests for new diagnosis and procedure codes should be created based on the need to capture new technology or disease. Any code requests that do not meet the criteria will be evaluated for implementation within ICD-10 on or after Oct. 1, 2015, once the partial freeze is ended.

Why Freeze the Code Sets?

There was interest expressed by vendors, system maintainers, physicians, other health care providers, payers, and educators to freeze or partially freeze the number of changes to the ICD-9 and ICD-10 code sets during the years leading up to the implementation of ICD-10. Their opinion is that reducing the number of changes in the annual code set updates will give everyone involved with the transition more time to work on implementing ICD-10 instead of code maintenance work.

Remember: You'll get regular updates for ICD-10 from Oct. 1, 2016, one year after the implementation date. No updates will be made to ICD-9 after Oct. 1, 2015, as the code set will no longer be valid.