

Outpatient Facility Coding Alert

ICD-10: Prepare for ICD-10 by Focusing on 6 Big-Picture Differences

Here's the lowdown on main changes from ICD-9.

October 2014 and the implementation of ICD-10 is coming fast, and all the information about transition can be overwhelming. Ensure your staff understands these six basic differences between ICD-9 and ICD-10, and the switch won't be so confusing.

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-CM has 21 chapters; ICD-9 has 17.
3. ICD-9-CMs V and E codes are incorporated into the main classification in the ICD-10-CM code:
 - Placeholders (X) are required to hold places followed by additional characters.
 - Seventh characters are required for obstetrics, injuries, and external causes of injuries.
 - 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 classifies injuries by type.
5. ICD-10-CM includes full code titles for all codes, so it is not necessary to reference back to common fourth and fifth digit categories.
6. There are 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).