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ICD-10 Update: Avoid a Shock: Start Acclimating to ICD-10 Now

Say 'so long' to V57.x confusion.

Preparing for ICD-10 is like getting a new goldfish, says **Sparkle Sparks, MPT, HCS-D, COS-C,** with Redmond, WA-based **OASIS Answers**.

When you win a fish at the fair, if you just open its bag and throw it in the fishbowl, the fish gets shocked between the different water temperatures, Sparks says.

How does this relate to ICD-10 training? If you wait until right before the ICD-10 deadline and then try to learn everything at once, you'll be in for a shock.

Instead, coders should start getting used to their new "goldfish bowl" by slowly acclimating to the new code set, Sparks says. Think of this like putting the fish, still in his bag, in the new water.

Get used to the new bowl (ICD-10) and you'll be more comfortable when you're turned loose with the new code set. Take the time now to gradually get familiar with ICD-10 without getting overwhelmed.

Try this two step process for ICD-10 preparation:

Spend the rest of 2013 getting more familiar with ICD-10. One way to begin is by taking the **World Health Organization's** online ICD-10 training, available at http://apps.who.int/classifications/apps/icd/icd10training/.

Then, in 2014 plan to attend a training class that details how to assign ICD-10 codes.

Prepare for ICD-10 to grow on you

"Don't fear ICD-10," Sparks advises. "It's so far superior to ICD-9." When you hear there are 70,000 codes you should be jumping for joy, she says "Because unlike ICD-9, when you look up a code in ICD-10, there are so many more codes, you find things the first time you look."

ICD-9, on the other hand, is so overstuffed, you can look and look for the condition you want to code and not find it, Sparks points out. ICD-10 will actually make your coding easier because it gives you 53,000 more choices than ICD-9.

Bonus: Taking ICD-10 training may just make you a better ICD-9 coder. "The detail and the clarity made me a better ICD-9 coder," Sparks says.

Plus, there will be no confusing V57.x (Care involving use of rehabilitation procedures) codes in ICD-10. "That's worth the price of admission!" Sparks says "We waste time on V57.x trying to define a therapy case. There is so much ambiguity in ICD-9 that doesn't exist in ICD-10."

Another plus: Once the transition to ICD-10 is complete, you'll be able to code for fractures as current conditions, says **Lisa Selman-Holman, JD, BSN, RN, HCS-D, COS-C**, **HCS-O,** consultant and principal of **Selman-Holman & Associates** and **CoDR □ Coding Done Right** in Denton, TX.

Don't let the new code set put you off. Coders who just dip their toes in with a short webinar on ICD-10 can feel overwhelmed by the long codes, Selman-Holman says. But if you spend a little more time with an ICD-10 coding manual

looking up diagnoses you frequently code in ICD-9, you'll be amazed at how most things work similarly, she says.

"Folks I've provided a little more training to ⬜ including plenty of practice ⬜ walk away enthusiastic and wondering why it's taken so long to implement ICD-10," Selman-Holman reports.