Home Health ICD-9/ICD-10 Alert

ICD-10 Update: Make Accurate Coding a Priority to Ease Your ICD-10 Transition

Does your agency understand the value of seasoned coders?

As you ramp up your ICD-10 preparation plans, make sure you're not leaving ICD-9 in the dust. Staying up-to-date and accurate with the current code set will help guarantee better accuracy with ICD-10.

Making the transition to ICD-10 successfully requires a thorough understanding of a wide range of agency processes. As you review the systems you have in place currently, you have an opportunity to look at and fix all of the processes that aren't efficient, says **Andrea Manning, BS, RN, HCS-D, COS-C**, of **Manning Healthcare Group** in Talkeetna, AK. Any problems in your current systems will be magnified in ICD-10, Manning cautions.

Of course your coding practices are one area that needs study as you plan your transition. To gain an understanding of how effective your current coding process is, ask the following questions, Manning suggested during the session "The Clock is Ticking ... Are You Ready For ICD-10-CM?" at the **National Association for Home Care and Hospice**'s annual meeting in October 2012:

Is accurate and appropriate ICD coding considered a high priority at your agency? If not, then why not?

Who is responsible for coding in your agency? Are they qualified?

Do you employ or contract with certified and/or experienced coding specialists?

Is coding just one more task added onto the workload of already busy field RNs and case managers?

How confident are you that the coding in your agency is accurate and appropriate?

What quality assurance and review processes take place prior to OASIS-C and claims submission?

What is the quality and quantity of the training your agency provides to staff responsible for coding?

Are coding practices covered in your orientation process?

How does your average HHRG compare to those agencies that utilize certified coders?

Could you be leaving revenue on the table through inaccurate coding practices?

"The purpose of home health agencies is to provide appropriate, quality patient care to those we serve," Manning says. "There is an expectation that agency field staff will provide the highest level of quality care. Is it realistic to also expect those same clinicians to have abilities as a coding specialist?"

Tip: Utilizing certified coding specialists will improve coding accuracy, compliance, and likely reimbursement as well, Manning says. Taking the burden of coding off field clinicians will also afford them more time and resources to care for their patients, she says.