

Home Health ICD-9/ICD-10 Alert

ICD-9 2011 Update: Checklist Helps You Prep Fast For This Year's ICD-9 Changes

Fewer changes this year signal that ICD-10 preparations are under way.

Each year, the ICD-9 Coordination and Maintenance committee spiffs up the ICD-9 code set with additions, revisions, and deletions. Make sure you're ready with this handy preparation list.

Why Are the Codes Updated Each Year?

The ICD-9 code set gets updated each year to track diseases and injuries -- especially as new conditions develop and we gain increased understanding of old conditions. As healthcare updates and advances occur, ICD-9 needs to have outdated information and terminology removed to make documentation standard and current. The annual changes make data more accurate, facilitate research on diseases and complications, and fix past mistakes.

Slow year: But this year brings fewer changes than usual. We're not seeing as many updates to ICD-9 for 2011 because resources are focusing on ICD-10 preparation, says **Joan L. Usher, BS, RHIA, COS-C, ACE**, with **JLU Health Record Systems** in Pembroke, Mass. Come 2013, we'll have a whole new diagnosis coding system.

Prepare Your Systems for the ICD-9 Update

To make sure you're ready for the 2011 ICD-9 changes, effective Oct. 1, take the following steps:

1. Purchase a new 2011 ICD-9-CM coding manual. An updated manual is your most important tool in your quest for coding accuracy. Ingenix (www.ingenix.com) offers an industry-specific guide: ICD-9-CM for Home Health Services, Volumes 1, 2 & 3.
2. Update cheat sheets and destroy the old ones. Remember, it's better not to use cheat sheets at all because you may miss some intricacy of coding. But if you must use them, make sure they are accurate.
3. Make sure your information systems vendor has updated your system with the new codes.
4. Create a list of patients whose cases will require code changes and when they are due.