

Home Health ICD-9/ICD-10 Alert

Reader Question: Turn to These Resources for Coding Guidance

Question: For those of us who do not have access to the American Hospital Association's Coding Clinic for ICD-9-CM, what advice do you have in regard to determining what sources to rely on for coding education? How can we know that the advice we're being given is correct? What are the implications regarding this problem as we transition to ICD-10?

New York Subscriber

Answer: Unfortunately, there is no resource out there that replaces Coding Clinic, says **Ida Blevins, RHIA**, supervisor of reimbursement & information management with St. John's Hospital Home Health Services in Springfield, Ill. This publication is "an essential tool in one's 'coding arsenal,'" she says.

Tip: If your home care agency is affiliated with a hospital, ask your health information management director if you could have access to the HIM department's Coding Clinic software, Blevins suggests.

If your agency is considering purchasing home health software, take the opportunity to suggest that you consider choosing a vendor that provides access to Coding Clinic as part of their package.

Coding credentials are important and may become even more so with ICD-10 on the horizon. But even with those credentials, access to Coding Clinic is still important.

Even without a subscription, you can still submit coding questions to the AHA here:

www.ahacentraloffice.com/ahacentraloffice/shtml/RequestCodingAdvice.shtml. But take care to send only questions regarding the coding guidelines and not about particular OASIS coding items such as M1024 to Coding Clinic.

Good idea: When choosing a coding educator for your agency, consider asking if the educator has access to the Coding Clinic. Also if an educator provides information to you about a "rule" that doesn't make sense ask for the source of the information.