Home Health ICD-9/ICD-10 Alert

Tool: Checklist Helps You Prep Now for 2012 ICD-9 Updates

Don't get caught empty-handed -- order your new coding manuals now.

You know ICD-9 codes change every year, but do you have the systems in place to incorporate these updates?Don't put your claims at risk of delay or denial -- know the key steps you must take to prepare for the 2012 update.

Accurate coding ensures not only that you are properly compensated for the care your agency provides, it also helps track the information that will improve the quality of that care.

Remember: 2012 codes will be rejected if you use them incorrectly after Oct. 1.

The most difficult part of preparing for the changes each year is remembering that old familiar diagnoses may be different, says **Therese Rode, RHIT** senior coding manager with **Inova VNA Home Health** in Falls Church, Va. Not only may the code have changed, but the rules for reporting the diagnosis may have changed as well. Make certain you look at the new codes and the instructions for all new and changed codes before it's time to use them, she says.

To keep data accurate and expedite reimbursement, use this checklist to prepare for the new codes:

- Educate staff. At least one staff member should take a recognized coding class and then provide an inservice to agency staff. Clinicians, QA staff and billers all need to understand when to use the new codes.
- Obtain and distribute new or updated coding books.
- Collect and destroy or update old cheat sheets.
- Contact your software company to be sure you have the update installed and then test the software to make sure the changes are correct.

Note: Look for in-depth articles and tips that will help you to prepare and to train others about the new and changed 2012 ICD-9 codes in future issues of Home Health ICD-9 Alert.