

# Long-Term Care Survey Alert

## ICD-10 Update: Implementation Date for ICD-10 Delayed

**Tip: Use this breather to make certain you're ready to transition.**

The entire healthcare community is abuzz over the Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014. Designed to avert the 24-percent pay cut physician practices were due to face on April 1, this temporary fix included another change buried in the text that has a major impact on your facility's diagnosis coding.

Mentioned about one-third of the way into the 121-page bill is a short paragraph that states, "The **Secretary of Health and Human Services** may not, prior to October 1, 2015, adopt ICD-10 code sets as the standard for code sets." This means that since the bill has been signed into law, ICD-10 will be delayed for at least another year beyond the scheduled Oct. 1, 2014 implementation date.

**Background:** Congress piggybacked an ICD-10 extension into legislation that reversed the 24 percent cut that physician practices were supposed to face on April 1. Although practices are pleased to have their 24 percent Medicare boost enacted, many physicians are growing weary of the repeated attempts to move the ICD-10 implementation date further down the road. A specific date has not yet been announced, but it is clear that ICD-10 won't go into effect until Oct. 1, 2015 at the very earliest, according to the legislation.

The following tips can help you maximize the additional time you'll have before ICD-10 is implemented.

### Check CMS Website Periodically

Although **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) was very confident about its belief that ICD-10 would not be delayed beyond Oct. 1, 2014, the agency grew very quiet following the announcement that the delay was official. Check in on the CMS website ([www.cms.gov/icd10](http://www.cms.gov/icd10)) throughout the year to get new tips on the ICD-10 program and how it will be implemented.

### Keep the Momentum Going

If you've got an ICD-10 training and implementation plan in place, don't scrap it now. Instead, just increase the detail in your training program so your staff is even more thoroughly prepared for the system before it goes into effect.

"The changes are in the implementation date, not that it is not coming at all, so prepare on," advises **Laureen Jandroep, CPC, CPC-I, CMSCS, CHCI**, senior instructor at CodingCertification.org in Oceanville, N.J. That preparation should continue to involve your whole staff, and not just your coders.

In a March 31 press release, **American Health Information Management Association** (AHIMA) CEO **Lynne Thomas Gordon, MBA, RHIA, CAE, FACHE, FAHIMA**, states: "On behalf of our more than 72,000 members who have prepared for ICD-10 in good faith, AHIMA will seek immediate clarification on a number of technical issues such as the exact length of the delay."

### Work With Vendors

In addition, if your EMR or other software vendor has already configured your systems to automatically switch to ICD-10 codes on Oct. 1, ask them to change that date. Since we don't yet know the exact new ICD-10 implementation date, you can let the vendor know that you're going to keep the switchover date open-ended until you have more information.

To read the complete text of the Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014, visit <http://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20140324/BILLS-113hrSGR-sus.pdf>.

