MDS Alert

ICD-10: What To Keep In Mind During Your ICD-10 Preparations

Take advantage of CMS resources, partial code freeze reprieve.

In little more than one year, you'll need to fully transition from ICD-9 to ICD-10, so now is a great time to zero in on the crucial transition details that your facility needs to know.

Make a Clean Transition

You might think you're ready to go with ICD-10, but you can't get a jump start on the system. "ICD-10 codes will not be recognized/accepted on claims before Oct. 1, 2014," stated **Sarah Shirey-Losso**, Hospital Team Lead, Provider Billing Group of the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS), in her April 18, 2013 National Provider Call presentation.

Nor can you use both code sets to help in your transition. "Claims cannot contain both ICD-9 codes and ICD-10 codes," warned Shirey-Losso.

What's more: Don't expect a grace period for ICD-10 implementation, either, experts say. ICD-9 codes will no longer be accepted beginning Oct. 1, 2014, Shirey-Losso said. On that date, all claims must use the new diagnosis code system.

Take Advantage of Partial Code Freeze

If you're trying to make changes to prepare your facility for ICD-10, the "partial code freeze" should make your job easier.

"The last regular, annual updates to both ICD-9-CM and ICD-10 code sets were made on Oct. 1, 2011," stated **Pat Brooks, RHIA**, Senior Technical Advisor for the CMS Hospital and Ambulatory Policy Group, in her April 18, 2013 National Provider Call presentation.

Oct. 1, 2012 and Oct. 1, 2013 updates involve only limited code changes to both ICD-9 and ICD-10 "to capture new technologies and diseases," according to Brooks. "On Oct. 1, 2014, there will be only limited code updates to ICD-10 code sets to capture new technologies and diagnoses, [but] no updates to ICD-9, as it will no longer be used for reporting." On Oct. 1, 2015, regular updates to ICD-10 will begin.

Good news: That means that while you're preparing your facility for ICD-10 right now, and even during the first year of ICD-10 implementation, you can focus on the ICD-9 to ICD-10 transition. You won't also have to deal with distractions based on numerous internal changes to the ICD-9 or ICD-10 code sets themselves.