

MDS Alert

MDS & Coding NEWS

Prepare for ICD-10 now to get a step ahead of the learning and software curve -- especially since the proposed rule implementing the new system may become final. That's the key advice from presenters at a Nov. 12 Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services-sponsored ICD-10 national provider call. "Vendors are participating in the comment process and you should initiate a dialogue with your vendor to determine whether they're aware of ICD-10 and are proceeding with ways to incorporate it," explained **Pat Brooks, RHIA**, a technical advisor with CMS. "We have not put out a final rule, and until such time as there's a definitive date to move forward, I don't believe it would be possible for many vendors to have a firm timeline yet" for ICD-10 conversion, Brooks advised.

For facilities worried that nailing down the ICD-10 system will take months of training, study findings presented during the CMS call may be reassuring. Last May, a formal testing process took place to "assess the functionality and utility of applying ICD-10 codes to actual medical records in a variety of healthcare settings and assess the level of coding training required," according to **Sue Bowman, RHIA, CCS**, director of coding policy and compliance at the **American Health Information Management Association**. Bowman shared information about the trial run during the Nov. 12 call. During the testing, credentialed health information management professionals who had no prior ICD-10 experience coded 6,177 medical records. Prior to the test, the participants received two hours of non-interactive training, and their coding accuracy and understanding of how to use ICD-10 were "surprisingly good," Bowman said. Plus, results showed that ICD-10 was found to be a "significant improvement" over ICD-9, and ICD-10 was more applicable to non-hospital settings than ICD-9, Bowman said.

To read more about ICD-10, or to review the presentation from the provider call, visit the CMS Web site at <http://www.cms/hhs/gov/ICD10>