

Modifier Coding Alert

ICD-10: Wait to See If 6 Experts Will Influence HHS and Make the Oct. 1 Date Stick

The cost of preparing for the ICD-10 upgrade is far less than originally thought.

Opinions at a Feb. 10, 2015 Energy and Commerce subcommittee hearing tipped the scale toward no more ICD-10 delays. If the final decision follows suit, it is full speed ahead to ICD-10 roll out.

Go forward with the Oct. 1 date on your calendar, but read on to stay aware of a discussion that may impact your implementation of ICD-10.

Hope the Hearing Gets You Closer to Implementation

Six of the seven industry experts, including **Sue Bowman, MJ, RHIA, CCS, FAHIMA**, American Health Information Management Association's (AHIMA's) senior director of coding policy and compliance, that testified at the congressional hearing on the topic of "Examining ICD-10 Implementation," were in favor of the Oct. 1, 2015 release date. Sharing their point of view was the subcommittee's chairman, republican **Joe Pitts** from Pennsylvania.

Now it is a waiting game to hear the Energy and Commerce subcommittee's determination on whether there will be another ICD-10 delay.

"Having a decision quickly from them would be by far the biggest help any of us could have," says **Charlotte T. Tweed, RHIA, CPC**, coding auditor, GME interim compliance manager/privacy officer and certified ICD-10 instructor at the Florida Hospital Graduate Medical Education Department of Coding & Auditing in Orlando, Fla. If CMS gives a green light, then you can move quickly into the areas that are on hold, and then be ready. "If we are delayed another year, then we can better allocate resources and employees," she adds.

Read the Improved Estimated Cost Data

The experts submitted documentation into evidence, including a survey from the Professional Association of Health Care Office Management (PAHCOM). The association surveyed its members on the cost of implementing ICD-10 for a physician practice with fewer than six providers and estimated the cost to be \$8,167. That is an average of \$3,430 per provider. This is much lower than originally expected. The American Medical Association (AMA) estimated the cost to be between \$22,560 and \$105,506 per provider.

Resources: Refer to www.tinyurl.com/k4txtdn for more on the congressional hearing and tinyurl.com/nlb53k3 to see the PAHCOM survey results.