

Pain Management Coding Alert

Reader Question: Start at Federal Level for IT Training

Question: I am the head of the coding department at a practice that has been under the same old-school physician forever - decades. We just hired another physician, and we're finally entering the 21st century! We are just starting to investigate more current technology and communication options for keeping records and communicating with patients, but I'm a little lost by the sheer number of options. And the risks! Can you point me in the right direction?

Maine Subscriber

Answer: Utilizing information technology (IT or "health IT" in this case) can be a huge boon for your practice in terms of efficiency - accuracy, time, and money - as well as making contacting patients less of a headache. However, there are definitely some inherent risks to storing and using health information electronically. Head over to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Civil Rights Health IT page for a starter toolkit, as well as guidance for more advanced aspects, once you get your feet on the health IT ground.

You can find more information at www.healthit.gov.