Home Health Coding and OASIS Expert

ICD-10: Get the Truth About these ICD-10 Myths

Don't delay your ICD-10 preparations.

The official transition date to the ICD-10 code set is less than a year away. Before Oct. 1, 2015 arrives, you'll want to make certain you know the facts so you aren't derailed by some common misconceptions.

Myth: It's safe to put off your ICD-10 transition preparations because the **Department of Health and Human Services** is likely to grant an extension beyond the Oct. 1, 2015, compliance date.

Fact: "All Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)-covered entities must implement the new code sets with dates of service, or date of discharge for inpatients, that occur on or after October 1, 2015," the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** says in a recent fact sheet. "HHS has no plans to extend the compliance date for implementation of ICD-10-CM/PCS; therefore, covered entities should plan to complete the steps required to implement ICD-10-CM/PCS on October 1, 2015."

Myth: The sheer number of codes in ICD-10 will make the new coding system impossible to use.

Fact: "Just as an increase in the number of words in a dictionary doesn't make it more difficult to use, the greater number of codes in ICD-10-CM/PCS doesn't necessarily make it more complex to use," CMS says. More codes in ICD-10 actually means you'll be able to code more accurately and more easily.

Perspective: When you're looking for a diagnosis code in ICD-9, you don't have to search the entire list of codes for the right code, CMS points out. The same holds true for ICD-10. Look to the Alphabetic Index and available electronic coding tools for help selecting the proper code.

Plus, ICD-10's improved structure and greater specificity will most likely make it easier to develop better computer-based coding tools that will help you locate codes with greater speed, CMS predicts. "Because ICD-10-CM/PCS is much more specific, is more clinically accurate, and uses a more logical structure, it is much easier to use than ICD-9-CM."

Myth: Because ICD-10 has so many more codes, there will be no hardcopy coding manuals once the transition is complete. All coding will need to be performed electronically.

Fact: "ICD-10-CM and ICD-10-PCS code books are already available and are a manageable size (one publisher's book is two inches thick)," CMS says. There's no need to use electronic coding resources for ICD-10 code selection.

Myth: The documentation required to select ICD-10 codes will be unnecessarily detailed.

Fact: Just as with ICD-9 codes, you must select ICD-10 codes based on medical record documentation. And while ICD-10's larger selection of more specific codes will improve data collection efforts, the new code set does include nonspecific codes you can use when the documentation doesn't support the more detailed codes. "As demonstrated by the **American Hospital Association/American Health Information Management Association** field testing study, much of the detail contained in ICD-10-CM is already in medical record documentation, but is not currently needed for ICD-9-CM coding," CMS says.

Note: Read more ICD-10 myths and facts here:
www.cms.gov/Medicare/Coding/ICD10/Downloads/ICD-10MythsandFacts.pdf.