

## **ICD-10: Less Than One Year Out**

### Physicians Continue Preparations for ICD-10

As the ICD-10 compliance deadline of October 1, 2014 draws closer, the level of interest and preparation increases. Physicians are now in the center of the activity and their help is needed to make sure the implementation of ICD-10 goes smoothly.

The most important thing for providers to do is to understand the magnitude of documentation requirements that will be necessary to ensure accurate coding in ICD-10. 3M Consulting Services recently published results from 125 clinical documentation engagements that found that physician documentation did not support coding at the highest level of specificity 30 to 40 percent of the time. These results were based on ICD-9 coding where the level of specificity is not nearly as aggressive as ICD-10.

The first step physicians should take to prepare for this change is to identify the top 25 diagnoses that you routinely treat and submit a claim for reimbursement. This will give you a starting point on which to build your documentation improvement plan. Once you have identified those diagnoses and codes then determine what those code translations are in ICD-10. There are a number of translation tools available on the internet in addition to the General Equivalency Maps that are posted at [www.cms.gov/icd10](http://www.cms.gov/icd10).

By reviewing your documentation in the patient's medical record, you will be able to determine if your documentation will allow the coders and billers in your office to accurately assign the correct ICD-10 code after October 1, 2014. You may find that documentation improvements are needed to ensure the correct codes are assigned so that financial neutrality is maintained. Remember, unspecified codes may be denied or pended for additional review if you consistently code to a lower level of specificity when a more accurate and specific code is available.

Ensuring documentation integrity is the first step on the road to ICD-10 readiness. System remediation, vendor readiness and staff training are also key components to your success. However, without a clear, concise and well documented medical record, your office may find themselves unprepared when the ICD-10 change takes place. Take steps today to begin reviewing and enhancing your documentation based on ICD-10 requirements.

#### **Additional resources for reference:**

<http://cms.gov/Medicare/Coding/ICD10/ProviderResources.html>

<https://ahima.optimizehit.com/domain/home>

<http://www.aapc.com/icd-10/assessment-readiness.aspx>