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233 N. Michigan Ave., 21st Fl.
Chicago, IL 60601

phone >>(312) 233-1100
fax >>(312) 233-1090
web >>www.ahima.org

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For more information, please contact:

Shauna Schuda

AHIMA

312-233-1097

shauna.schuda@ahima.org

Theresa Grant

PCI

312-558-1770

tgrant@pci-pr.com

AHIMA Applauds HHS for Encouraging Hospitals to Use Health Information Technology *ICD-10 and Meaningful Use are Essential for Quality Health Care*

CHICAGO – December 5, 2011—The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) applauds U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius on the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) intent to make it easier for physicians to adopt health information technology.

Currently, healthcare providers who participated in the Medicare electronic health record incentive program in 2011 will have to meet ICD-10 standards by 2013. However, under the new rule, healthcare providers who did not participate in the program until 2012 will have an extension until 2014 to comply with the new ICD-10 standards.

“It is essential for healthcare providers to move toward ICD-10, so it aligns with the meaningful use incentive program as well as value-based reimbursement,” said AHIMA’s CEO Lynne Thomas Gordon, RHIA, FACHE. “We support the HHS in their decision to provide an extension so all healthcare providers can make the transition to ICD-10. Not only will this save the hospital money in the long run, but patients will get better, more accurate care.”

“To fully achieve meaningful use of electronic health records, the healthcare industry must utilize a more modern, clinically rich classification system,” said AHIMA Director of Coding Policy and Compliance Sue Bowman, RHIA, CCS. “The transition to the ICD-10 classification systems will provide greater specificity and clinical detail that will improve the quality of healthcare data.” Allison Viola, MBA, RHIA, AHIMA’s director of federal relations also noted that ICD-10-CM and some terminologies are expected to be part of Meaningful Use – Stage 2 and the delay will allow vendors to ensure good mapping with the Stage 2 electronic health record requirements.

AHIMA has tools available to provide healthcare professionals with essential training that will help ease the learning curve on ICD-10. Visit ahima.org/ICD10.

About AHIMA

Representing more than 63,000 specially educated Health Information Management professionals in the United States and around the world, the American Health Information Management Association is committed to promoting and advocating for high quality research, best practices and effective standards in health information and to actively contributing to the development and advancement of health information professionals worldwide. AHIMA's enduring goal is quality healthcare through quality information. www.ahima.org

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