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AHIMA: Remain Vigilant in ICD-10 Transition ***Association Emphasizes Impact of Delay on Costs, Progress Already Made***

CHICAGO – Feb. 17, 2012 – The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) said it will reach out to Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) leaders to emphasize that there should be no delay in the implementation and use of the ICD-10-CM and ICD-10-PCS classification systems.

“The benefits of ICD-10 to reduce costs and improve patient care are invaluable to the future of our healthcare system,” said AHIMA CEO Lynne Thomas Gordon, MBA, RHIA, FACHE. “We recommend that HHS reach out to the full healthcare community and gather more information about the great strides many have achieved – in good faith – since the ICD-10 deadline was set in January 2009. AHIMA is committed to moving forward with this transition and will continue to be a leading voice on this issue.”

According to Dan Rode, MBA, CHPS, FHFMA, vice president for advocacy and policy at AHIMA, some of the current pressures experienced by the healthcare industry are in part created by the previous delays in implementing ICD-10. “The healthcare industry finds itself trying to move into the 21st century with electronic health records and health information exchange, but it is dealing with a data classification system that is nearly 40 years old,” he said. “The critical high-quality coded data that ICD-10 will give us will help improve the quality of healthcare for all patients.”

Thomas Gordon emphasized that the healthcare industry should continue with its ICD-10 planning efforts regardless of any delay announced by HHS. “Many entities, including hospitals and healthcare systems, health plans, vendors and academic institutions, have put a great deal of energy and resources into preparing for ICD-10’s implementation. AHIMA does not want this progress and investment to be lost in a delay. We call on HHS to not delay and urge the healthcare community to not to let up on implementation efforts,” she said. Thomas Gordon also stressed AHIMA’s commitment to the adoption and use of electronic health records and information exchange, noting that only with a 21st century classification system will the investment in these national goals be achieved.

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About AHIMA

Representing more than 64,000 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