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## AHIMA: Disappointed with Another ICD-10 Delay, Seeks Clarification on Date of New Implementation Deadline

**CHICAGO – March 31, 2014 –** The <u>American Health Information Management Association</u> (AHIMA) expressed deep disappointment that the U.S. Senate voted today to approve H.R. 4302, Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014, which included language delaying implementation of the ICD-10 code set until at least October 1, 2015.

"On behalf of our more than 72,000 members who have prepared for ICD-10 in good faith, AHIMA will seek immediate clarification on a number of technical issues such as the exact length of the delay," said AHIMA CEO Lynne Thomas Gordon, MBA, RHIA, CAE, FACHE, FAHIMA.

Since the transition to ICD-10 remains inevitable and time-sensitive because of the potential risk to public health and the need to track, identify and analyze new clinical services and treatments available for patients, AHIMA will continue to help lend technical assistance and training to stakeholders as they are forced to navigate the challenge of continuing to prepare for ICD-10 while still using ICD-9.

It has been estimated that another one-year delay of ICD-10 would likely cost the industry an additional \$1 billion to \$6.6 billion on top of the already incurred costs from the previous one-year delay. This does not include the lost opportunity costs of failing to move to a more effective code set.

"AHIMA will continue our work with various public sector organizations and agencies such as Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT, and the National Center for Health Statistics along with our industry partners such as the ICD10 Coalition so that ICD-10 will realize its full potential to improve patient care and reduce costs. These are goals that AHIMA and other healthcare stakeholders and our government leaders all share," Thomas Gordon said.

The United States remains one of the only developed countries that has not made the transition to ICD-10 or a clinical modification, a more modern, robust and precise coding system that is

essential to fully realize the benefits of the investments in electronic health records and maximize health information exchange.

The delay casts a cloud on the employment prospects of more than 25,000 students who have learned to code exclusively in ICD-10 in health information management (HIM) associate and baccalaureate educational programs.

"As demands for quality healthcare data continue to increase, this delay will add an additional significant hurdle for the healthcare system to fill these important HIM positions," Thomas Gordon said. "It is truly unfortunate that Congress chose to embed language about delaying ICD-10 into legislation intended to address the need for an SGR fix in their effort to temporarily address the long outstanding and critically important physician payment issues."

For the latest developments, visit the Journal of AHIMA and follow @AHIMAResources.

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## **About AHIMA**

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) represents more than 72,000 educated health information management and health informatics professionals in the United States and around the world. AHIMA 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