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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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, please contact:

Bridget Stratton

Public Relations

312-233-1097

bridget.stratton@ahima.org

ICD-10: Worth the Wait

Journal of AHIMA details delay, how best to move forward with transition

CHICAGO – June 3, 2014 – The unexpected decision by the federal government to delay ICD-10 until at least October 1, 2015, caused much consternation for health information management professionals, providers, coders, students and others who had invested hundreds of hours and millions of dollars to prepare for the new code system.

The June issue of the *Journal of AHIMA* examines the delay with an emphasis on how best to use the additional time in the story, "[Not So Fast! Congress Delays ICD-10-CM/PCS.](#)"

"ICD-10 remains the only coding system that offers the flexibility and specificity to properly assess healthcare services, understand public health needs, and get the best rate of return from our national investment in electronic health records (EHRs) and meaningful use," said Lynne Thomas Gordon, MBA, RHIA, CAE, FACHE, FAHIMA, the CEO of the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA). "AHIMA maintains its commitment to help the industry with the transition and we are developing policy-informing recommendations and best practices to assist with implementation and training."

Like numerous other AHIMA members, Thea Campbell, MBA, RHIA, director of HIM at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, wrote e-mails and placed calls to her legislators to lobby against the delay. Now, Campbell said, she is ready to move forward. "We're done with the pity party, here's the strategy," she said in the *Journal* article.

One payer very much against the delay was health insurer Cigna. Daniel Sullivan, Cigna's vice president of program delivery, told the *Journal* that the transition to ICD-10 should still remain a priority for the healthcare industry.

"(ICD-10) expands the language we use to communicate about health, and with the more extensive language, we can fine-tune the value we add to the delivery of healthcare," he said. "Whether that be aspects of life, health coaching, pain management, all of those activities can be better served by more granular information."

At AHIMA's ICD-10-CM/PCS and Computer-Assisted Coding Summit in April, Rose T. Dunn, MBA, RHIA, CPA, FACHE, chief operating officer at First Class Solutions, implored attendees to

keep the transition momentum going. She pressed providers to keep physicians practicing ICD-10-level documentation and for coders to continue training on the new code set.

“Let’s let ICD-10 standards be the gold standard,” she said. “Remember that productivity learning curve? We now have 18 months to get rid of that curve.”

Also in this issue

- The June issue also includes the article, “[Don't Deny the Denials](#),” which articulates the importance of a strong claims denial strategy to offset initial, potential ICD-10-based coder productivity loss. The story quotes Mary H. Stanfill, MBI, RHIA, CCS, CCS-P, FAHIMA, vice president of HIM consulting services at United Audit Systems in Cincinnati. “Anything you can do to prevent re-work will have a significant impact on productivity and the ability to be efficient,” she said.
- The practice brief, “[Navigating a Compliant Breach Management Process](#),” highlights AHIMA’s new Breach Management Toolkit, a comprehensive collection of resources and best practices to help healthcare organizations and HIM professionals navigate the HIPAA Breach Notification Rule and the overall breach management process. The toolkit is intended to raise awareness of the importance and responsibility of everyone within an organization to report HIPAA breaches to the appropriate designated personnel. The toolkit also provides breach prevention education and training.

Read these articles and more in the June issue of the *Journal of AHIMA* or online at journal.ahima.org.

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About AHIMA

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) represents more than 71,000 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.

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