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Additional ICD-10 Delay Provides Opportunity to ‘Reflect, Regroup, Revitalize’

AHIMA provides testimony at NCVHS hearing, releases policy paper with recommendations from association’s ICD-10/CAC Coding Summit

CHICAGO – June 10, 2014 – With little more than a year until the new ICD-10 implementation deadline, the [American Health Information Management Association](http://www.ahima.org) (AHIMA) encourages the healthcare industry to set priorities to ensure readiness.

Sue Bowman, MJ, RHIA, CCS, FAHIMA senior director, coding policy and compliance at AHIMA, shared findings and recommendations from AHIMA’s recent policy paper on ICD-10 during her testimony delivered to the Standards Subcommittee of the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics (NCVHS) today.

“Although many stakeholders are disappointed and even frustrated by the ICD-10 delay, we believe that this is an opportunity to reflect, regroup and revitalize,” said Bowman. “This extra time offers all stakeholders the chance to get the transition right and mitigate risks caused by inadequate preparation.”

AHIMA recommends that organizations set priorities to ensure they are ready for implementation in 2015. These include achieving documentation excellence, providing education to coders, clinicians, data users and other stakeholders, and conducting testing with business partners.

“Achieving high-quality documentation and thorough coder preparation minimizes the adverse impact of the ICD-10 transition on coding accuracy and productivity, which in turn reduces the potential for rejected claims and payment errors,” Bowman said.

Drawn from discussions and a real-time poll of healthcare professionals in April, the policy paper, [Achieving ICD-10-CM/PCS Compliance in 2015: Staying the Course for Better Healthcare-A Report from the AHIMA 2014 ICD-10/CAC Coding Summit](#), outlines challenges associated with the delay, offers recommendations where organizations can focus to successfully transition to ICD-10 and suggests specific steps the industry should take.

AHIMA’s additional recommendations include:

- Increasing engagement with physicians and their staff, ancillary departments, and post-acute providers in order to ensure all stakeholders are informed partners in a successful transition to ICD-10
- Evaluating and resolving ICD-9-CM coding and documentation issues
- Continuing to focus on clinical documentation improvement initiatives
- Leveraging technology to provide “real time” documentation improvement tools to facilitate documentation capture at the point of care
- Developing more thoughtful and comprehensive educational plans
- Focusing intensively on coder education, continually enhancing their skills, including ensuring coders have a solid foundation in basic coding education and biomedical sciences
- Shortening the coding learning curve by encouraging ICD-10 trained coders to continue to practice ICD-10 coding
- Continually assessing and improving coding accuracy and productivity
- Analyzing data to identify and focus on high-risk areas
- Implementing and fine-tuning computer-assisted coding technology
- Conducting more robust testing
- Using ICD-10 data collected from dual coding to demonstrate the value of ICD-10

AHIMA also urged CMS and other federal partners to work with public and private sector groups to dispel ICD-10 myths; educate members of Congress and other leaders about the value of ICD-10; emphasize the many public and national health information systems that rely on the more specific data ICD-10 provides; offer help to providers who may have difficulty with the transition, including small practices and those in rural communities; stay committed to the October 2015 deadline; and continue testing.

“The healthcare information horizon is bright with the high-quality information that ICD-10 will be able to offer,” said AHIMA CEO Lynne Thomas Gordon RHIA, MBA, CAE, FACHE, FAHIMA. “AHIMA is committed to working with HHS and industry partners through advocacy, outreach, and educational initiatives in order to prevent any further delay in ICD-10.”

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About AHIMA

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) represents more than 71,000 health information management and health informatics professionals in the United States and around the world. AHIMA is committed to promoting and advocating for 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