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AHIMA, eHI Survey Shows Healthcare Organizations See Long-Term Benefits in ICD-10

Survey indicates an increase in healthcare executives' understanding of the value of the expanded code set

CHICAGO – November 4, 2014 – As they become more familiar with ICD-10, healthcare executives recognize the long-term benefits of the updated code set and plan to use it for quality improvement and performance measurement, according to a new report based on a survey by the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) and eHealth Initiative (eHI).

Survey results show more respondents plan to use ICD-10 for quality improvement, performance measurement and outcomes measurement than respondents of a similar study in 2013.

Respondents said they believe ICD-10 will make managing population health and conducting clinical, health services, or translational research easier, and that ICD-10 will ultimately improve the accuracy of claims, quality of care, and patient safety.

A majority of the respondents also indicated they are far enough along in the implementation process to conduct end-to-end testing prior to the compliance deadline of Oct. 1, 2015, although smaller organizations appear less equipped to test.

"These results demonstrate that the healthcare community has stayed on track with preparation despite delays and that as healthcare executives continue to learn more about the specificity in ICD-10, they see clear value in it," said AHIMA CEO Lynne Thomas Gordon, MBA, RHIA, CAE, FACHE, FAHIMA. "AHIMA will continue to provide training and resources to help healthcare organizations, including small physician groups, prepare for implementation so all healthcare organizations and patients will experience the benefits of a modern and robust coding system."

Four hundred and fifty-four individuals responded to the survey representing a wide range of healthcare settings, including healthcare delivery organizations, acute care hospitals, clinics and physician practices to assess the anticipated affect of ICD-10. Areas of focus in the survey included readiness for testing and implementation, anticipated financial, clinical and operational affects, and the strategic implications of an expanded code set.

While a majority of respondents are ready to implement end-to-end testing, survey results show that smaller organizations are less ready to test or to mitigate a possible decrease in staff productivity. Respondents also indicated they are not aware of when their business partners will be prepared to conduct testing.

"As organizations continue to prepare for implementation, survey results highlight the need for communication and collaboration among healthcare organizations and business partners," said eHI CEO Jennifer Covich Bordenick. "By working together, organizations will be better equipped to handle the demand of ICD-10 implementation and ultimately leverage the code set for better healthcare outcomes."

As organizations work toward meeting the compliance deadline, AHIMA and eHI recommend:

- **Test early and frequently.** Testing should take place at all stages of implementation, not only in an end-to-end environment. Stakeholders should test systems as they work with their vendors to make upgrades and communicate with all of the individuals involved to ensure the system functions properly.

- **Collaborate.** Stakeholders should reach out to peers and other organizations in their region to share best practices.

- **Mitigate risk prior to implementation.** Strategies such as dual coding can help organizations mitigate the risk of ICD-10 implementation by familiarizing staff with the new code set in advance, thus improving coding accuracy and productivity.

Additional results from the survey include:

- 70 percent of organizations are planning to conduct additional training and practice prior to the compliance date to mitigate challenges to staffing as they familiarize themselves with the new code set.

- 62 percent say they are using the delay to improve clinical document integrity.

- 59 percent will train more staff on ICD-10.

- One-third of respondents are planning to fill gaps by contracting with outsourced coding companies.

- 32 percent plan to purchase computer-assisted coding technology or similar tools.

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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**

About eHealth Initiative
eHealth Initiative (eHI) is a Washington D.C.-based, independent, non-profit organization whose mission is to drive improvements in the quality, safety, and efficiency of healthcare through information and information technology. eHI is the only national organization that represents all of the stakeholders in the healthcare industry. Working with its membership, eHI advocates for the use of health IT that is practical, sustainable and addresses stakeholder needs, particularly those of patients.www.ehidc.org.