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Making ICD-10 Preparation A Priority

AHIMA Discusses Survey Findings, Expresses Confidence and Encourages Industry To Maximize Time Before Oct. 1 Implementation Deadline

CHICAGO – June 22, 2015 – A significant increase in the recognition of long-term benefits of ICD-10 and a need to increase testing before the Oct. 1, 2015, implementation deadline were among the results of the third annual eHealth Initiative Survey conducted in conjunction with the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA). Preliminary results of the survey were discussed on a June 17 webinar with a more detailed report to follow in July.

“It is heartening to see additional stakeholders recognize that ICD-10 will benefit patients and providers alike, ultimately improving health outcomes at reduced cost; the industry has had years to prepare for this transition and will be ready on October 1,” said Lynne Thomas Gordon, MBA, RHIA, CAE, FACHE, FAHIMA. “There are still more than three months remaining and, AHIMA, a longtime advocate for the necessity of replacing our current outdated and obsolete code set, continues to stand ready to help providers make a smooth transition.”

The [eHealth Initiative survey](#) showed that provider organizations have completed many key steps in the implementation process, most notably that 72 percent of respondents, overall, have trained staff on ICD-10. Almost 80 percent have conducted or will conduct end-to-end testing. The survey showed a need for providers to pick up the pace of testing in the remaining months before the compliance date.

The survey showed that hospitals and larger organizations tend to be further along in their ICD-10 preparation than physician practices or small organizations. For example, only 41 percent of physician practices have trained staff on using ICD-10 compared to 85 percent of hospitals. However, there is still time for those who lag behind to get ready in time for the October 1 compliance date. Thomas Gordon noted that free or low-cost education and implementation resources are widely available to assist small providers with their ICD-10 transition.

“ICD-9 was implemented in the 1970s and there is a significant cost to relying on a code set ill-designed to support current and future health information needs,” Thomas Gordon said. “The previous delays to ICD-10 implementation – far from being a panacea – have come at a

potential detriment to patient care and have resulted in a significant increase in total cost that entities have already spent or budgeted for the transition.”

Sue Bowman, MJ, RHIA, CCS, FAHIMA, AHIMA’s senior director of coding policy and compliance, represented AHIMA on the webinar. She commented that while clinical workflow and productivity, vendor/partner readiness, lack of staff, and competing health IT priorities, and change management were identified as key challenges, all of these were rated as much more significant challenges last year.

Earlier this month, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) reported that only 2 percent of test claims were rejected due to ICD-10 coding errors during its second of three rounds of ICD-10 testing.

The long-term benefits of ICD-10 that were increasingly recognized by survey participants were: analyze and report measures on performance, quality and safety, collect and exchange health information, conduct clinical, health services or translational research; document patient encounters, code patient encounters, manage population health, manage risk and negotiate contracts with health plans.

Ninety-seven percent of respondents said they plan to measure impact of ICD-10 following the transition.

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About AHIMA

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) represents more than 101,000 health information 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