

ICD-10 Coding



Three Major Areas of Impact for Healthcare Practices

The benefits of ICD-10 are numerous for healthcare and dental practices. While the ICD-9 code set limited coding for several innovative procedures, the scope of expanding and adding new codes with ICD-10 is much more extensive. Important areas that ICD-10 has an impact on include;

- Reimbursement
- Healthcare IT
- Clinical Coding
- Quality Measurement
- Monitoring & Performance
- Patient Care

Because treatment options and techniques have been constantly evolving, the need for a new code set which could ensure more accurate coding was required and this is why ICD-10 Procedure Coding System (PCS) was introduced.

ICD-9- Clinical Modification (CM) limitation on expanding also affected approval for new procedures. It is also impossible to accurately code any new advanced treatments using the ICD-9 code set. However, with ICD-10-PCS, diagnostic codes available for coding healthcare services will increase from a mere 13,000 to 68,000. Furthermore, if other separate procedures can and need to be coded, it will become possible to differentiate between simple and complex procedures.

Migrating from ICD-9 to ICD-10 – Transition Challenges

The healthcare industry in general has been concerned about the challenges that will surface when migrating from ICD 9 to ICD 10 code set. The biggest area of concern for most practices centers around billing and payment issues.

ICD codes were introduced for the purpose of healthcare claims billing between healthcare providers and health plan/insurance providers. The use of the code set allowed the insurance companies to quickly understand what procedures were performed on a patient. Any healthcare practice that does not migrate to ICD 10 codes or in the event that an incorrect code is used in a claims submission, that practice runs the risk of not getting paid by the insurance company. The same goes for insurance companies that do not make the shift to ICD-10.

While most large hospitals and health care groups as well as large physician groups will find it easier to migrate to ICD-10, the biggest challenge to the transition for these big healthcare bodies is in the form of temporary cash-flow issues caused by ICD-10 specific payment delays.

The small physician practices however, are the ones that face an uphill battle with migrating to ICD-10. The new code set will have an impact on Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act-covered bodies which includes a vast number of healthcare providers, claims handlers and payers. Billions of dollars in payments from leading insurers such as Medicare, Medicaid, Tricare and the Veterans Health Administration will be calculated based on the new set of codes to the associated hospitals, physician groups and practices. So the possibility of the revenue streams of a number of healthcare providers being impacted by the new code set is very real.



ICD-10 IMPLEMENTATION

IS YOUR PRACTICE READY?

Changing the Dental Healthcare Landscape

ICD - 10: The Updated Diagnosis Code Set

- ICD-10 will impact and encourage quality procedure documentation.
- Providers will be required to code in more detail and ensure greater accuracy and specificity.
- The shift from ICD-9 to ICD-10 code sets will ensure increased accuracy in payments for new procedures, a drop in rejected claims and improper reimbursement claims, and also improve efficiency in the billing and reimbursement process.



- It is 3-7 Characters in length.
- Includes more than 69,000 codes.
- First character is alpha; Characters 2-7 are numeric or alpha.
- It offers flexibility and can accommodate new codes.
- Improves coding accuracy and offers greater level of data detail for improved analysis and medical research.
- Helps in ensuring better Interoperability and exchange of healthcare data between the U.S. and other countries.



How ICD - 10 will Impact Dental Practices

5 Crucial Areas of Impact

- Dentists - Documentation and Code Training.
- Nurses - Training In Documentation, Forms, and Prior Authorization.
- Practice Managers - Training In New Policies and Procedures, Vendor and Payer Contracts.
- Billing - Training in Policies and Procedures.
- Front Desk - Training In HIPAA and Systems.



Preparing for Practice for the Big Change

- Contact your vendor(s) to understand how their implementation process will impact your practice.

ICD-10: Three Important Areas of Impact for Healthcare Practices

Reimbursement Claims Process

The advantage of migrating from ICD-9 to ICD-10 code sets for healthcare practices is that it will lead to more accurate payments for new procedures. It will also lower the instances of rejected claims as well as reduce the chances of incorrect reimbursement claims. All of which of course can help in improving the billing and reimbursement process of healthcare practices to a large extent.

Also because ICD-10 code set is so detailed and specific, the instances of claims being investigated or rejected due to insufficient information will also drop. Any issues that arise because of lack of specific and necessary information included in the diagnosis and procedure code will be effectively resolved with ICD-10. For practices this means a substantial reduction in any rework which will not only improve the efficiency of the reimbursement process for the healthcare practice but also bring about substantial reduction in administrative costs.

And as healthcare practices become more apt at clinical care documentation, it increases the likelihood of accurate claims being submitted the first time around with easy clearing of reimbursements for wide a range of procedures; this in turn can have a positive impact on the revenue cycle of a practice.

Healthcare IT – New Vs Old Platforms

Healthcare practices that still use inflexible and/or aging technology will need to look into the adoption of new technology to support ICD-10 transition. It is best to look at healthcare IT systems that allow easy implementation of new code sets and redundant applications over a single practice-wide platform. Another factor to consider here is that return on investment with ICD-10 can only happen in the long term.

Any healthcare technology transition should only be implemented after careful consideration and also after taking into account the capability of the current technology platform to support new opportunities that ICD-10 will present. If however, the current platform can be aligned with the new business model then it eliminates the need for a complete re-haul of IT platform used by a healthcare practice.

Improved Patient Care

Enhanced patient care is at the core of the ICD-10-CM and-PCS code set which allows for detailed clinical documentation and accommodation of new technologies and procedures. The codes enhance better data capture which helps in improved assessment of complications and can lead to improved evaluation of patient healthcare outcomes.

Furthermore, ICD-10-CM effectively improves and addresses coding for medical complications as well as medical safety concerns. Personal health records (PHR) will also include a more detailed level of understanding and description which can result in improved awareness and understanding of the disease and the diagnosis by the patient. As patients become more involved in their healthcare it can lead to improved sense of health condition management.

The enhanced focus on detailed clinical documentation that ICD-10 offers will help both healthcare providers and insurance providers to accurately and easily identify patients who need specific disease management. This level of information can then be used to offer more customized plans and programs. Implementation of ICD-10-CM will also help in streamlining the process of capturing public health diseases which again can help in improving patient care in the community.

Conclusion

ICD-10 is a vast improvement over ICD-9. The shift in the code sets will help in ensuring greater accuracy in payments for new procedures and a substantial reduction in rejected claims and improper reimbursement claims. ICD-10 will effectively reduce the need for additional documentation to support claims. The new code set will also help in furthering analysis and medical research as well as support greater interoperability and exchange of healthcare data between the U.S and other countries.

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