

Certified I10-Ready

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By Chris Dimick

To build up competencies in the new code set, AHIMA-credentialed professionals must add ICD-10-CM/PCS continuing education to their credential maintenance through 2013.

The impending coding classification system change from ICD-9 to ICD-10 is the talk of health information management, and with due fanfare. ICD-10-CM/PCS will bring big changes to HIM operations and processes. In order to keep AHIMA-credentialed professionals at the forefront of the industry, certification requirements will need to change, too.

AHIMA certification represents a high level of achievement and demonstrates proficiency and a broad base of knowledge. AHIMA-certified professionals have passed a rigorous exam and commit to ongoing professional development through the Commission on Certification for Health Informatics and Information Management (CCHIIM) recertification process. The CCHIIM recertification (maintenance of certification) program ensures that CCHIIM-certified professionals demonstrate ongoing competence in the domain areas in which they are certified through either maintenance or enhancement activities.

In order to validate that an AHIMA-certified professional has gained knowledge of the ICD-10-CM/PCS coding system, CCHIIM has determined that continuing education hours with ICD-10-CM/PCS content will be required through 2013, as applicable and relevant to the specific AHIMA credential held by the individual.

Earning these CEUs validates that certified professionals have gained knowledge of the new coding system and are able to integrate this knowledge into their positions, according to CCHIIM officials.

Awareness, Use, Application of ICD-10

How much ICD-10-CM/PCS competency an HIM professional requires depends on his or her role. In broad terms, three levels describe the needs: awareness, use, and application.

AHIMA certificants are encouraged to tailor their ICD-10 education specific to their job roles. For example, an RHIT who performs coding as a large percentage of his or her daily routine is encouraged to follow the requirements set forth for those specialized coding credentials. Further information can be found at www.ahima.org/icd10/role.aspx.

Awareness Examples	Use Examples	Application examples
<p>Awareness of the impact of ICD-10-CM/PCS on coding and other typical HIM functions and on the healthcare industry in general.</p> <p>This may include an overview of the classification system and potential impact to workflow processes in order to prepare for the system changes.</p>	<p>Use of ICD-10-CM/PCS, which may include analysis, trending, or providing information that involves coded data, but not the actual application of the codes in daily work; requires more in-depth knowledge of systems.</p>	<p>Application of ICD-10-CM/PCS, which includes assigning codes on a routine basis for various purposes and requires a more extensive knowledge of the systems.</p>
<p>Introduction to ICD-10 basics (HIM Domain: Clinical Data Management)</p>	<p>Business impact assessments (HIM Domain: External Forces)</p>	<p>ICD-10-CM structure, guidelines, and conventions</p>

		(HIM Domain: Clinical Data Management)
ICD-10 impact on information flow and processes (HIM Domain: Clinical Data Management)	Implementation considerations and process (HIM Domain: Clinical Data Management)	ICD-10-CM by chapter (HIM Domain: Clinical Data Management)
	Understanding the General Equivalence Mappings (HIM Domain: Clinical Data Management)	Biomedical sciences (e.g., anatomy, physiology, medical terminology, and pathophysiology) (HIM Domain: Clinical Foundations)
	Clinical documentation improvement strategies (HIM Domain: Clinical Data Management)	ICD-10-PCS definitions (root operations and approaches) (HIM Domain: Clinical Data Management)
	Reimbursement methodologies (HIM Domain: Clinical Data Management)	

All Credentials Need ICD-10 Education

"It is important for certified professionals to get the ICD-10-specific CEUs because ICD-10 is such a major change from ICD-9," says Julie Swim, RHIT, CCS, FCS, coding manager at Central Baptist Hospital, based in Lexington, KY, and CCHIIM chair.

"Even the HIM professionals who are not coders need to have a basic awareness of ICD-10, since the coded data touches so many different aspects of our profession and the healthcare industry," she says.

Because ICD-10 will impact all areas of HIM, all AHIMA-credentialed professionals should have knowledge on the code set in order to show the healthcare industry they are at the forefront of the profession, says Erika Hardy, RHIA, CCS, assistant director of health information services at Opelousas General Health System, based in Opelousas, LA, and a CCHIIM board member.

"We want to be the organization that people can look to as the gold standard for information about ICD-10," Hardy says. "If you are an RHIA or RHIT, that [role] is more management of a medical record department, and you are probably unable to supervise people if you are not at least aware of the coding system."

RHITs and RHIAs are required to get six CEUs focused on ICD-10, far less than CCS credential holders, who are required to get 18 ICD-10 CEUs. This is because RHIT/RHIAs won't be working with ICD-10 as closely as a coder with a CCS, Hardy says.

Still, ICD-10 codes will pop up in an HIM manager's work. The structure of the codes themselves has changed from ICD-9 to ICD-10, and HIM managers will need to know how to read and look up codes in order to manage coding staff or respond to some clinical requests, according to Swim.

"Almost everyone in our profession deals with the coded data, either directly or indirectly," Swim says. "CCHIIM took that into consideration with the different roles our certification holders have in our profession when we set the specific CEU requirements, but we still urge everyone to tailor their education to their current job role."

Credentials Required by December 2013

By December 31, 2013, AHIMA-certified professionals must obtain baseline educational experiences focusing specifically on ICD-10-CM/PCS. These ICD-10 CEUs will count as part of an AHIMA certification holders total CEU requirements for the overall purpose of recertification. The number of CEUs depends on the credential held (see “ICD-10 CEU Requirements” [below](#)).

The required ICD-10 CEUs are included in the existing total required CEUs for each cycle. They do not add to the number of hours required. For example, an RHIT must complete 20 hours of continuing education. With the new policy, six of those hours must focus on ICD-10 training.

Professionals who hold more than one AHIMA credential are not required to meet the ICD-10 requirements for each credential. They must obtain only the highest number of CEUs from the credentials held. For example, the RHIA requires six hours of ICD-10 CEUs, and the CCS requires 18. An HIM professional holding both credentials must complete 18 CEUs covering ICD-10, not 24.

The ICD-10 CEUs must have been obtained after January 2011, unless they were earned through any of the AHIMA Academy for ICD-10-CM/PCS: Building Expert Trainers in Diagnosis and Procedure Coding training sessions. Those professionals who have successfully completed the ICD-10 academy either before or after January 2011 will have earned all required ICD-10 CEUs for their credential.

What Qualifies for CEUs?

CCHIIM did not mandate specific activities or create a list of specific CEU opportunities because professionals will have differing needs depending on their job roles. Individuals have the flexibility to choose the activities that best support their current job duties.

"If I, with my RHIA, work in IT, I don't necessarily need to know how to code ICD-10. I just need to be aware of the code set in general," Hardy says. "I would have different classes in ICD-10 compared to an actual coder who just got out of school a couple years back. Then I'd need actual hands-on, how-do-I-code-this training, versus an overview of the system."

As for exactly what type of classes qualify for ICD-10-specific CEUs, the same criteria used for regular CEUs applies to the ICD-10 units.

"You can go to any class that discusses ICD-10, whether it is an introduction to the basics or a detailed class on how to implement it," Hardy says.

A formal ICD-10 class taught at an HIM professional's facility by an ICD-10 trainer would qualify for CEU credit, as would an ICD-10 class taught at a local community college or a session presented at a state CSA meeting on ICD-10. Audio seminars, online classes, and webinars on ICD-10 would also qualify, as would an ICD-10-focused refresher course on anatomy and physiology.

"Any seminar or class that you go to that deals with ICD-10 can fill those requirements," Hardy says.

Certification holders who are unsure whether a certain training session will fulfill the ICD-10 CEU requirements can contact the AHIMA certification department for clarification at www.ahima.org/certification/contact.aspx. A list of ICD-10 CEU examples is also available on the certification Web site, as is the official recertification guide.

ICD-10 CEU Requirements

The total number of ICD-10-CM/PCS continuing education units (CEUs) required differs by the AHIMA credential held, as show below.

The ICD-10 CEU requirement does not add to the total number of CEUs that professionals must obtain in each cycle; they are included in the existing total. Professionals who hold more than one AHIMA credential are not required to meet the ICD-10 requirements for each credential. Instead, they must obtain only the highest number of CEUs from the credentials held.

Credential Held	ICD-10 CEUs Required
CHPS	1
CHDA	6
RHIA	6
RHIT	6
CCS-P	12
CCA	18
CCS	18

Keeping Current with the Times

The switch from ICD-9-CM to ICD-10-CM/PCS is a major event that will dramatically change both coding and healthcare operations. But while ICD-10 is very different, is not that much more difficult, Hardy says.

"Coders do not need to be scared of this new system," she says. "Through education we will all be able to learn what we need to do to function in our job."

More Information Online

Additional information and resources related to the ICD-10 CEU requirements-including an FAQ-are available on the AHIMA Web site at www.ahima.org/certification.

The site also contains information on recertification, including the recertification guide, forms, a description of the HIIM domains, and a CEU calculator.

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