

Last Minute Tips to Prepare for ICD-10 Implementation

[Save to myBoK](#)

By Melanie Endicott

This is it. The final countdown is on. ICD-10-CM/PCS is just a few short weeks away from finally becoming a reality in the United States. For those of you that have been preparing for years for this day, I bet you are breathing a huge sigh of relief and thinking, “just get it over with already!” Meanwhile, those who were hoping that there would be another delay and are now scrambling to get ready for ICD-10 might have some different thoughts. Here are some tips for last minute preparations to ensure a smooth transition:

1. System Testing

Do a final testing of systems to make sure they are ready for the go live date. Check in with all of your vendors, including health plans, billing services, clearing houses, and all software systems that utilize ICD codes to ensure they are ready for October 1.

2. Reduce AR

The HIM department should be working diligently in September to get their accounts receivable down and getting all of the ICD-9 cases coded and sent out for processing. Any records with an encounter (outpatient) or discharge (inpatient) date on or after October 1 will be coded in ICD-10. Coders should anticipate a few days of overlap where they will be coding some claims in ICD-9 and some in ICD-10.

3. Updated Queries

The clinical documentation improvement (CDI) department should have all of their query templates updated for ICD-10 documentation needs. ICD-10 is more specific than ICD-9 in many areas, so it is critical to have accurate and complete documentation in the record to facilitate proper and timely coding.

4. Physician Readiness

Physicians should have already received education on ICD-10, specifically the changing documentation needs. Do a last minute check-in with them to ensure they are ready and answer any questions they might have.

5. Communication

The executive team and all leaders throughout the healthcare organization should be kept apprised of the ICD-10 roll out. Communication is critical at this point.

6. Forms

Take one last look at all of your forms to ensure they have been updated with ICD-10 codes. This includes electronic forms. Ensure that the fields are ready to accept ICD-10 codes.

7. Risk Mitigation

Try to anticipate anything that could go wrong and have an action plan for those scenarios. Consider assigning someone as the go-to person to contact in the event of any ICD-10 issues in the first few days of implementation.

8. Celebrate Success!

And finally, congratulate yourself on a job well done. ICD-10 has been a long time coming and it's now here! Have a department party to recognize all of the planning and preparation that went into this change.

Melanie Endicott, MBA/HCM, RHIA, CDIP, CCS, CCS-P, FAHIMA, is senior director of HIM practice excellence, coding and CDI products development at AHIMA. She has over 15 years experience in HIM and coding, with her most recent focus being in ICD-10-CM/PCS, and has presented numerous times at the regional, state, and national levels on HIM and coding topics. She was previously a director of HIM practice excellence, focusing on coding products, resources, and education, at AHIMA. Melanie is an AHIMA-approved ICD-10-CM/PCS trainer and an ICD-10 Ambassador.

Original source:

Endicott, Melanie. "Last Minute Tips to Prepare for ICD-10 Implementation" ([Journal of AHIMA website](#)), September 09, 2015.

Driving the Power of Knowledge

Copyright 2022 by The American Health Information Management Association. All Rights Reserved.