

Looking Back and Moving Forward: The Journey to Consumer-Driven Healthcare Continues

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Last year was one of both challenges and opportunities, and this new year is shaping up to follow suit. The final countdown to ICD-10-CM/PCS is on. While the road to ICD-10 has not been easy, the transition will lead to better quality of care for all consumers. With the greater level of detail required to meet the demands of the new coding and classification system, the quality of clinical documentation is moving into the spotlight. As better data capture and streamlined coding practices drive improved reimbursement, organizations will quickly be able to reap the benefits of ICD-10 implementation.

Even as health information professionals are undertaking the final sprint to help the US healthcare industry complete the ICD-10 implementation process, our journey continues ever forward—informatics has been on the horizon for a while, and is growing closer. Stage 2 of the “meaningful use” EHR Incentive Program is an important mile marker on the journey toward health informatics. Stage 2 ups the requirements for interoperability and health information exchange—60 percent of medications, 30 percent of laboratory tests, and 30 percent of radiological exams must be ordered using computerized order entry. Patient demographics and vital signs will be captured as structured data. Clinical decision support emerges as clinical information and alerts are triggered when providers encounter patients with a particular diagnosis or treatments. Consumers will have the ability to view, download, and transmit their health information.

As always, protecting patient information will be paramount. HIM professionals will play a critical role in the successful transition from stage 1 to stage 2 of the meaningful use program.

Meaningful use stage 2 encourages consumer engagement and paves the way for personal health records. The Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT has launched the Blue Button Initiative, raising consumer awareness on their right to access personal health information in an electronic format. AHIMA is deploying a campaign to showcase the Blue Button Initiative, myPHR.com, personal health records, and health literacy to empower consumers to actively participate in their healthcare. Drive the power of knowledge in your community and take the Blue Button pledge today.

Consumer engagement will place big demands on healthcare providers. As volume-based models of healthcare change to value-based models, consumers and payers will expect more for their healthcare dollar. Tools and techniques for data-driven decision-making and sound knowledge of information governance principles should be at the top of the list for HIM priorities. The accuracy of data-driven decisions will determine future organization success. The quality of that information can be assured through sound information governance policies and procedures.

In order for us to understand the complexities that our organizations face as new healthcare models emerge, HIM professionals must leverage data to build a solid foundation for organizational success. Be an information catalyst for your organization by transforming your information governance policies into something that supports agility, positively impacts the bottom line, and improves patient outcomes. As always—Dream Big, Believe, and Lead.

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