

Not the End of the World as We Know It

Save to myBoK

By Lynne Thomas Gordon, MBA, RHIA, FACHE, CAE, FAHIMA, chief executive officer

Where were you in the late 1990s? Maybe you were watching “Seinfeld.” Maybe you were doing online stock trading with “irrational exuberance.” And maybe you were looking into “the Year 2000 problem” or what simply became known as “Y2K.”

Programmers scrambled to update systems and businesses were urged to make sure their outside vendors were Y2K-ready. Even the Journal of AHIMA published a Y2K checklist. These preparations went on for several years, and at the end of December 1999, the clock struck midnight and... nothing happened.

While the true scale of the potential problem will never be known, it can't be denied that the Y2K scramble helped advance everyone's thinking about the concepts of business continuity preparedness. Bottom line: we learned a bit more about anticipating and preparing for change.

No More Delays

This year the industry is anticipating and preparing for another big change-the long-awaited implementation of ICD-10-CM/PCS. HIM professionals have found themselves at the center of preparation and planning for this effort. But when a one-year delay was put into effect last year, some preparations were put on hold. A recent survey released by the Workgroup for Electronic Data and Interchange revealed that more than two-fifths of provider respondents did not know when they would complete their ICD-10-CM/PCS impact assessment on internal changes and begin external testing-results very similar to the same survey in 2012.¹ Despite this data, I urge you to not procrastinate. While the official “go-live” date is October 1, 2014, you'll want to be ready several months ahead of time. If you realize your organization is not taking the steps it needs to implement ICD-10-CM/PCS on schedule, say something. But you can't do ICD-10-CM/PCS implementation alone. As with Joint Commission preparation or other large-scale projects, you need reinforcements.

Talk to people in your organization who can help make a difference. Reach out to your state association and read the AHIMA website and the numerous ICD-10-CM/PCS resources available to you.

Making the Transition

This month's issue of the *Journal* can help you take stock of where you are in the process and where you need to be. In “[The Final Countdown](#),” Lisa Eramo discusses how HIM professionals can analyze the financial impact, tackle training challenges, begin testing, and mitigate possible productivity dips. Shelley McDermott and Wendy Coplan-Gould trace the ICD-10-CM/PCS journey of the University of Washington Medicine Health System in “[Path to ICD-10-CM/PCS Preparedness](#).” Torrey Barnhouse provides some additional industry statistics and offers next steps in “[ICD-10-CM/PCS Status Check](#).” Some organizations are working across state lines and within health systems to make the transition, as detailed in Mark Jahn's “[Joining Forces on ICD-10-CM/PCS](#).”

How will you make your transition? Let us know how the ICD-10-CM/PCS journey is going at journal@ahima.org.

Note

1. Workgroup for Electronic Data Interchange. “WEDI Provides Vital ICD-10 Industry Readiness Survey Results to CMS.” April 11, 2013. <http://www.wedi.org/news/press-releases/2013/04/11/wedi-provides-vital-icd-10-industry-readiness-survey-results-to-cms>.

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