The Reality of ICD-10: The ICD-10 Transition Can Be a Success, as Long as Work Starts Now

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Apprehension in the healthcare industry is growing as the ICD-10 implementation deadline approaches. However, the fear of the transition doesn't match its legend or lore.

Apprehension can crystallize into anxiety if you're not careful. It's like an old pair of shoes you love. You know they're ugly, worn out, and sometimes stink, but you continue to wear them because they are so comfortable and you don't want to go through that breaking-in period.

After attending several ICD-10 sessions last summer, I can tell you firsthand that the fear is overblown and the ICD-10 transition will be a success as long as we start preparing now.

The Work Ahead

There is much to do to prepare for the ICD-10 transition. In order to implement ICD-10 successfully, organizations must:

- Outline a compliance strategy
- Provide awareness and education for staff and physicians
- Identify and implement systems and software updates
- Identify and correct documentation issues
- Identify and implement process and workflow changes
- Avoid coding backlogs and maintain DNFB goals

We must envision how our organizations will use ICD-10 as we improve documentation and educate clinicians.

In my experience, without passion, it is very difficult to muster up enough energy to bring people along on the journey ahead. So we have to quit waiting and watching for new developments on ICD-10. It's time to start the journey now.

After all, a successful ICD-10 migration requires that all those involved in the transition really embrace it. Therefore part of our journey includes work in selling the transition, counseling staff through the change, and encouragement through the migration.

Leading the ICD-10 Charge

Many of us will be charged with leading ICD-10 steering committees. This is a perfect time to showcase our leadership and program management skills. The program plan should link all actions to the completed enterprise-wide gap and impact analysis report to ensure effective solutions are fully integrated.

Our ICD-10 program management includes people, process, and technology that will involve at a minimum:

- An ongoing program that is implemented consistently to achieve certain results.
- A program management process that pulls various projects together to improve the performance of the organization.
- A program that will understand related system and documentation tool constraints and determine the processes required to improve results based on resources allocated.
- A program that is able to react to changes in strategy and the environment, which requires adjusting the program's speed and scope.

If all you hear are the naysayers, you can become apprehensive. So become knowledgeable of the new coding scheme and understand the new system and the processes that will be required.

Let's turn up the heat and get things moving in our organizations to ready everyone for ICD-10.

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