How Can You Prepare for ICD-10?

There are approximately 14,000 ICD-9-CM diagnosis codes. When ICD-10-CM goes into effect on October 1, 2015 there will be over 68,000 ICD-10-CM codes. You must be thinking how will I ever learn that many codes?

Even with ICD-9-CM, do you know all the codes? No! The same applies to ICD-10-CM. You and your staff will learn the ICD-10-CM codes for the most common diagnoses, as well as the codes necessary for proper reimbursement.

You can start now by creating a job aid of the top ICD-9-CM codes that you use most frequently. For your job aid, list the Diagnosis Description, along with the ICD-9-CM code you currently use when coding this diagnosis. Next, look up the corresponding or equivalent ICD-10-CM codes using the official ICD-10-CM Coding book. You can also use one of the free resources on the web or subscription services to look up the ICD-10-CM codes. Be sure the ICD-10-CM equivalent makes sense and is a close match. Keep in mind there is not always an exact one-to-one match and many times one ICD-9-CM code is equivalent to more than one ICD-10-CM code.

Study the ICD-10 codes on your job aid to become familiar with the new ICD-10 format and structure. Notice that the ICD-10 codes can be more specific and can contain laterality (right vs. left). Use your job aid throughout the transition to ICD-10.

The job aid on the clipboard illustration is an example, but you can follow the same format to list the codes you use most often.

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