CMS’ Tips for ICD-10 Testing

Testing is critical to your successful implementation of ICD-10. After making ICD-10 changes to systems, your practice will need to complete internal and external testing. Internal testing involves testing ICD-10 codes and systems with your practice’s coding, billing and clinical staff. External testing includes testing with your external business partners and involves testing transactions from start to finish using ICD-10 codes with payers and other business partners. This is sometimes referred to as end-to-end testing.

Test Plan:

Your ICD Implementation Manager should start with creating a test plan. The test plan documents the approach your practice (and your vendors) will take to verify that your business processes and systems will meet ICD-10 requirements. The most critical elements of a test plan include:

- Scope
- Features to be tested and not tested
- Acceptance criteria
- Testing approach
- Tool(s) to be used
- Schedule
- Risks and contingencies
- Staff and training needs

Test Cases:

Define test cases to ensure that the system updates meet your business requirements. Test case design should include both anticipated and unexpected outcomes. Test cases should also include high-risk scenarios.

Internal Testing:

When planning for internal testing it is important to:

- Coordinate with your vendors as necessary to support testing execution and issue resolution.
- Identify testing workflows and scenarios for your practice that apply uses cases, test cases, test reports and test data.
- Identify when your practice will be able to run test claims using ICD-10.
- Develop a project plan that recognizes dependencies on tasks and resources. The plan should prioritize and sequence efforts to support critical paths.
External Testing:

Your practice should create an inventory of external entities with who you exchange data and the testing you will need to coordinate to ensure timely, accurate ICD-10 implementation. Prioritize your business partners when making a test plan. Start with the business partners that make up the largest percentage of practice revenue. External business partners may include outsourced billing or coding services, payers, clearinghouses, hospitals, health information exchanges, and government entities.

According to the CMS Guidelines for ICD-10 Transition, completing both internal and external testing will take time. Your practice should allow up to 9 months to complete internal testing and up to 11 months to complete external testing. Expect to continue testing transactions and fine-tuning your transition up until the ICD-10 compliance date of October 1, 2014.

CMS Pilot Test:

National Government Services (NGS), under contract to CMS, is developing a pilot test using ICD-10 as the business case, to validate a defined universal testing process that can be used throughout the health care industry.


Sources for this article:
- CMS ICD-10 Implementation Guide for Small and Medium Practices
- CMS Guidelines for ICD-10 Transition Timeline for Practices
- www.physicianspractice.com/blog/icd-10-testing-know-where-begin