Supporting ICD-10 is about clinical data and patient care
by Gloryanne Bryant, RHIA, CCS, CDIP, CCDS

Supporting ICD-10 is beyond what you hear from special interest groups who oppose its adoption; rather it is the wide-reaching benefit to clinical data and patient care, that is the core of the ICD-10-CM/PCS code set; and, is why supporting ICD-10 is the right thing to do.

Each of us as health information Management professionals and others who are part of the health care workforce can and should support ICD-10. I myself, remain very passionate about the implementation and the positive aspects that the code set brings. With over 35 years in the industry, I have never been more committed to a change or an initiative than I am about the move to ICD-10 in 2015. And the primary reason I am so committed to this code set is for the clinical data and the clinical data that will help drive us to better health care.

Please know that this code set is about the management of diseases and the patient care of our citizens, those who are patients and those that are not. It is about 21st century cures, treatment and technologies, and ICD-10 can truly help. Although there is fear and resistance in a singular part of health care against ICD-10, this should not derail or defuse one’s support or one’s ability to express and share the need and benefits about the code set adoption. Supporting and advocating for ICD-10 in 2015 is not about special interest groups it is about our health care system, in all settings and everyone’s support is needed now.

The ICD-10 classification was originally developed by the World Health Organization as an improved way of seeing health care throughout the world and now ICD-10-CM/PCS will enable the United States health care professionals, payers, providers, and policy makers to see patient care, treatment, and outcomes in a new and improved way, which allows us to react to those outcomes, and that is a benefit for all. There is no doubt that scientific progress and health care technology have changed and are continuing to change; that is good and is needed. Now we need to harness this change with the use of the ICD-10 code set in 2015 for the benefit of the many and not the few.

Years ago, the World Health Organization stated that the ICD-10 strengthens epidemiological and statistical health care data used for health care research. Health care research should not be taken lightly, as the value of this work is enormous to health care as a whole, but also to individual patients, families and future generations.

To help demonstrate this, think about five health conditions that are very common place in the U.S.; asthma; Alzheimer’s, diabetes; neoplasm (cancer), and Parkinson’s. These diseases not only affect the patient on an individual basis but also their families and the whole of the health care system. They carry with them a great emotional toll as well as the physical and financial tolls which are significant.

You most likely know someone with one of these five diseases and may even have had personal experience with one or more of them. Per the CDC some interesting facts note that asthma occurs in 6.8 million children in the U.S.; the number of non-institutionalized adults who
currently have asthma is 18.7 million, staggering figures! We need ICD-10 data to help change the course of health care and this condition.

It is estimated that there are 5.2 million Americans (of all ages) who have or will have Alzheimer’s disease this year according to the American Alzheimer’s Association - AND two-thirds are women!! Again we need ICD-10 data to direct a new course for improvements in care, treatment and outcomes, not to mention finding the cause of this disease. These are just a few examples that are far reaching.

There is clinical data for population health that requires effective and innovative strategies to achieve population health management. Improved clinical care and reduced costs continue to be on the forefront of the health care industry, thus, we are focusing more on population health—an approach that specifically aims to improve the health of the entire human population. In order to achieve this, we need quality clinical data that ICD-10 will provide, but that ICD-9 cannot. The time is now not later nor within another version of ICD, as some have stated. Waiting is not the answer to improve the quality of health care and our health care system.

We need the ICD-10 coded data to help with tracking, trending, treating and finding cures for these conditions, AND many, many others, I strongly want to see the workforce within health care and even those not in health care join in and be passionate about ICD-10 in 2015 for the reasons noted.

Clinical data and quality patient care is what matters, thus ICD-10 matters, do not be apathetic, lets support the advancements that the classification system brings and that need to be made. Put a tagline in your e-mail address that says “I Support ICD-10 in 2015;” share articles, like this one; and information found on the CMS Web site “Road to ICD-10.” with others. We can do this; we can all be champions for ICD-10 patient care and make it happen in 2015!

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