

## ICD-10: It's About Patient Care

by Richard Garcia, MD, MPP, MHA

As a practicing physician, I can understand the frustration of having to implement yet another "something." Physicians are already feeling the effect of the loss of productivity that has come with the adoption of new electronic health record (EHR) technology. Physicians are being asked to adopt new technology, to see patients faster and to spend more time documenting in the medical record. With respect to ICD-10, it is no surprise that physicians are very concerned about the perceived loss of productivity and about what

this means to their practice. For physicians "it is about patient care" and about not being taken away from the bedside.

If this is the case, then why do I support ICD-10 implementation? This is a fair question. The answer is that "it is about patient care"...the very same reason that physicians give when they oppose ICD-10. In fact

it is the very same reason that physicians gave to me when they opposed the implementation of EHRs (and by the way I support this too). The adoption of EHRs with all of the resistance that has come with it will provide (and

has provided) many benefits to our patients. Access to patient information, alleviating drug interactions, sharing relevant information with other providers and with our patients, are all positive benefits that come with moving away from paper to an electronic environment. Today even our slowest adopters of EHR technology complain when computerized physician port of entry (CPOE) or electronic physician documentation is temporarily incapacitated for a brief upgrade.

ICD-9 is our paper chart. Yes, it is easy to use. It is less complicated. We have used it for a long time and it seems to be working just fine, right? Well not really. Just like the paper chart, many details are getting lost. There are sometimes single codes for what are many individual and very different conditions. We are aggregating patient data in health care that is not accurate, or at least not as accurate as it could be. With the advent of electronic health records and the added granularity of ICD-10, we now have an opportunity to perform sophisticated health care analytics that will drive research and the allocation of precious financial resources.

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**ICD-10 IS ABOUT PATIENT CARE AND AS PHYSICIANS WE NEED TO SUPPORT ITS IMPLEMENTATION.**

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