



The Charge Toward ICD-10

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To provider organizations, ICD-10 can seem like a sci-fi reimagining of a giant squid: an enormous, multi-tentacled monster that can swallow hospitals whole. Of its many powerful appendages, one of the longest and strongest – yet surprisingly and frequently overlooked – is physician charge capture. Grab a hold of this and providers have a good start at taming the beast.

Physician charges are the top of the funnel of the healthcare provider revenue cycle; and ICD-10 has the potential to clog it, prolonging a billing, approval and collections process that many providers fear will bog down after October 1. The charge entry challenge begins with guiding physicians through more than 68,000 diagnosis codes, many of which contain a level of specificity so granular that they border on the absurd. (Read *Struck by Orca* for a chuckle.) Then there's charge verification, code edits, clinical documentation, integration with billing and so on.

Whatever ICD-10 charge capture solution is implemented, several tenets should be paramount:

- Enter data once; don't make providers re-enter the same data across multiple applications. Whatever data elements are required, add them once – as part

of placing an order (indicating the diagnosis that justifies it), or within the clinical documentation, or as part of the charge – and have it automatically cascade through physicians' workflow.

- Enable physicians to speak "clinician", not "data". Physicians cannot be expected to memorize the myriad of codes within the ICD-10 scheme. Better to provide them a set of clinician-friendly terms that in turn are mapped to a preferred ICD-10 code, so physicians can use the clinical terminology (including abbreviations, eponyms and synonyms) they're familiar with when writing notes and entering charges.
- Support both ICD-9 and ICD-10 during the changeover process, since not all billing systems will be ready at the same time.

If provider organizations embrace a well-conceived electronic charge capture solution as the ICD-10 revenue cycle starting point, chances are better that October 1 will pass without major billing disruption.

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