On February 16, the Department of Health and Human Services announced its intent to delay the ICD-10 compliance date. In April, it announced a proposed rule to set the new compliance date as October 1, 2014. There has been much debate on the merits of implementing ICD-10, with the American Medical Association being one of the most vocal critics of the pending implementation and lobbying to stop it altogether. As with any delay, there have been both sighs of relief and anger at the delay announcement. Many organizations have already spent an extraordinary amount of money to enhance their IT systems and to train their staff and physicians.

What does this mean for physicians?

It means that physicians can step back, realize that most of us were not ready for the original implementation date of October 1, 2013, and take a strategic step forward to plan for the impending implementation. We should take this delay as an opportunity to create our plans for education and training correctly and thoughtfully. Practices should take advantage of this delay to begin education and documentation review, which can only help a practice, regardless of the new implementation date. Costs associated with implementation can also be spread out over time, reducing the financial impact to the practice.

GLMS plans to host a summer educational series that will be free for GLMS members. Both seminars will take place from 7 to 8:30 a.m. in Baptist Hospital East Auditorium. On July 12, the business impact will be covered by Jessica Williams, GLMS physician education and practice support manager. On August 9, ICD-10 documentation will be discussed by Sherry Thomas, CCP, CCP-AS, CEO and director of education at the Professional Healthcare Institute of America.

Let’s not waste the opportunity we have been given. The time to prepare is now. 

Note: Dr. Schrodt is chair of the GLMS Emerging Medical Concepts Committee. He practices Psychiatry with Integrative Psychiatry PLLC. The GLMS physician education and practice support staff of Dottie Hargett, Jessica Williams and Stephanie Woods and Sherry Thomas, CEO and director of education for the Professional Healthcare Institute of America, assisted with this article.

Randy Schrodt Jr., MD

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