



## What You Need to Know About ICD-10

**ICD-10 is a diagnostic coding system** created by the World Health Organization (WHO) in the late 1990's. It was intended to replace ICD-9 in order to more accurately capture diseases, signs and symptoms, abnormal findings, complaints, social circumstances, and external causes of injury or diseases. The ICD-10 is significant because the new code system will allow for better analysis of disease patterns and treatment outcomes, which will theoretically advance medical care.

The updated ICD-10 code sets are a significant update to the ICD-9. Differences include:

- ✓ **NUMBER OF CODES**  
ICD-10 will have over 68,000 codes versus the 13,000 currently in use for ICD-9
- ✓ **COMBINATION CODES**  
ICD-10 can be used to classify a multiple diagnoses or a diagnosis with a complication
- ✓ **SPECIFIC INFORMATION**  
ICD-10 differs from ICD-9 in that a code indicates identifiers such as right versus left (in the instance of an arm or kidney for example), an initial encounter versus a follow-up and any causal information
- ✓ **DIGIT STRUCTURE & SPECIFICITY**  
The new structure is quite different than ICD-9 in that both alphabetic and numeric characters are used:
  - Digits 1-3** will now refer to a category  
Digit 1 is always alphabetic
  - Digits 2-3** are either alphabetic or numeric
  - Digits 4-6** will cover clinical details including severity, etiology and anatomic site and are alphabetic or numeric
  - Digit 7** is an extension and is either alphabetic or numeric

### How will ICD-10 impact my practice?

ICD-10 is expected to create a challenge for medical providers, namely in the area of productivity. Given that the ICD-10 is so substantially different than ICD-9, coders must be able to learn how to do their jobs dramatically differently. As such, medical coder productivity is expected to drop by at least 25%.

Based on a large-scale study by the MGMA, less than 10% of providers are ready for ICD-10 and according to a study by KPMG, most healthcare providers haven't properly determined how the transition to ICD-10 will affect them. As an alternative to re-training their staff, assuming the major costs of a loss of productivity as well as experiencing potential losses in billing due to poor coding, many medical providers are looking to external billers with expertise in ICD-10.

### Is drchrono ICD-10 ready?

drchrono's billing team has been prepared and ready for ICD-10 since we learned of its proposed use nearly 5 years ago. This is a major advantage for our clients because we mastered ICD-10 ahead of the curve and have a cohesive strategy for working with this coding system.