



MAY 19 2016

Walter G. Suarez, M.D., M.P.H.
Chairperson, National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Health Statistics
3311 Toledo Road, Room 2402
Hyattsville, MD 20782

Dear Dr. Suarez:

Thank you for your letter providing findings and recommendations from the first National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics (NCVHS) Review Committee Hearing on adopted standards (including code sets and identifiers) and operating rules held in June 2015. We thank NCVHS for its role in improving administrative efficiency and effectiveness across the healthcare industry. We have received your letter and are reviewing all of the findings and recommendations.

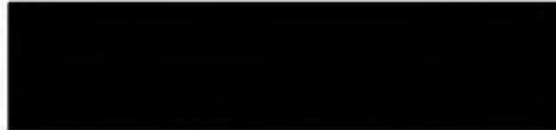
Administrative simplification is very important to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HHS has undertaken various steps to advance administrative simplification by broadening outreach and education, increasing coordination and consistency, and examining industry compliance.

- **Broadening outreach and education:** We are leveraging best practices from a successful ICD-10 implementation and engaging stakeholders to increase awareness of adopted standards and operating rules. ICD-10, a HIPAA standard code-set, successfully launched on October 1, 2015, with a dedicated ICD-10 Ombudsman and ICD-10 Coordination Center to actively monitor implementation by conducting daily status calls, answer provider inquiries, and report any potential trends or issues. CMS has been carefully monitoring the transition and is pleased to report that claims continue to process normally.
- **Increasing coordination and consistency:** We have begun working with the healthcare industry, Standards Development Organizations, and the Operating Rules Authoring Entity to ensure that standards and operating rules are clear, flexible, and address an area in need of standardization. We will continue to utilize the Unified Agenda to establish predictability and help the industry to plan and prepare for upcoming regulations.

- **Examining industry compliance:** HHS is including enforcement as part of our education plan to ensure that the healthcare industry is cognizant of compliance requirements and the associated penalties for non-compliance.

Again, thank you for your recommendations on ways to advance administrative simplification. We look forward to continuing to work with the NCVHS Review Committee and the private sector on ways to increase administrative simplification across the health care industry. We will update the NCVHS Review Committee on the status of its recommendations at future meetings.

Sincerely,



Mary K. Wakefield, Ph.D., R.N.
Acting Deputy Secretary