



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

January 2, 2014

Larry A. Green, M.D.  
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. Green:

Thank you for your letter on findings from the June 2013 National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics (NCVHS) hearing on the current state of administrative simplification standards, code sets, and operating rules. I appreciate your valuable insights and recommendations as we implement measures to streamline health care transactions and operations.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is considering all of the issues and recommendations presented in your letter, including the status of the planning, testing, and implementation of the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-10-CM) and Procedure Coding System (ICD-10-PCS) (hereinafter, ICD-10), as required by the January 16, 2009 *HIPAA Administrative Simplification: Modifications to Medical Data Code Set Standards to Adopt ICD-10-CM and ICD-10-PCS* final rule, and the September 5, 2012, *Administrative Simplification: Adoption of a Standard for a Unique Health Plan Identifier; Addition to the National Provider Identifier Requirements; and a Change to the Compliance Date for the International Classification of Diseases, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition (ICD-10-CM and ICD-10-PCS) Medical Data Code Sets* final rule.

HHS is committed to transitioning to ICD-10 with industry stakeholders on October 1, 2014, and together we are holding provider, payer, clearinghouse, and vendor calls to access readiness. In addition, HHS continues to offer its free ICD-10 technical assistance and training to small, rural, home health, and other safety-net providers to help them transition to ICD-10. Many large providers, clearinghouses, and payers are on track with ICD-10 implementation, while some smaller provider groups require additional assistance. To that end, we expanded our free ICD-10 technical assistance and training program to help small providers transition. We have received positive feedback about the free training and invite you to partner with us to spread the message. Most recently, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) held a national provider call reaching more than 27,000 providers to educate them about ICD-10, discuss best practices, and answer key implementation questions. The ICD-10 website features new tip sheets, fact sheets, and checklists and received 98,000 website visits in September 2013 alone. The website has grown with over 130,000 participants receiving weekly ICD-10 updates.

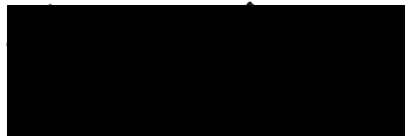
CMS is also developing an ICD-10 implementation tool to help small providers transition, and the agency released two new ICD-10 training videos that provide helpful implementation tips and offer free continuing education credits. With input from industry stakeholders, CMS is continually developing new implementation and educational resources to help stakeholders transition.

CMS is also launching a new public-private partnership with the Workgroup for Electronic Data Interchange (WEDI) and other industry partners to offer pre- and post- implementation support. The ICD-10 Support Center will offer free technical assistance and work collaboratively with industry to help answer common implementation questions.

I also appreciate your recommendations regarding the status of the development and implementation of operating rules, the 2013 WEDI Report, and the effect of the Health Insurance Marketplace capabilities on standards. With regard to your recommendation to implement targeted assistance and outreach programs directed at small providers to improve their understanding of HIPAA transactions and operating rules, we are working with industry partners on an outreach strategy that targets providers regarding the benefits of administrative simplification and the benefits of operating rules particularly. We are also considering and exploring ways of moving forward with your other recommendations on operating rules— including the request for an assessment of their level of adoption, the value of operating rules that may apply to multiple transactions, and the opportunities for operating rules to support other health reform initiatives.

Again, thank you for your letter. I continue to welcome your suggestions and feedback on ways that the Department can help industry stakeholders make a successful transition to ICD-10. The NCVHS's commitment to supporting the adoption of standards, operating rules, and identifiers and their related processes has played an important role in improving the efficiency and quality of health care. I look forward to the NCVHS's ongoing engagement and guidance.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box redacting the signature of Kathleen Sebelius.

Kathleen Sebelius