Independence ✚

TO: Participating hospitals

FROM: Linda Paterson
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DATE: August 13, 2015

SUBJECT: **Transition to ICD-10: Compliance date is October 1, 2015**

On October 1, 2015, the United States will transition from ICD-9 to ICD-10 as the medical code set for medical diagnoses and inpatient hospital procedures. The transition to ICD-10 is not just an update but rather a complete overhaul. Our entire industry – payers, providers, and vendors – is affected by the transition to the expanded ICD-10 code set. These coding changes will affect medical coding operations, software systems, reporting, administration, registration, and more. Any delay could result in your organization experiencing backlogs, denials, and impacts on revenue.

I am writing to remind you that we are rapidly approaching the October 1 deadline and to encourage you to plan ahead. If you don't use valid ICD-10 codes starting on October 1, 2015, you will not be able to successfully bill for your services.

Now is the time to make sure your office is ICD-10 ready. The transition will go much more smoothly for organizations that have planned ahead. A successful transition to ICD-10 will be vital to transforming our nation's health care system and ensuring uninterrupted operations.

Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) and Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) codes will continue to be used for outpatient, ambulatory, and office-based procedure coding. Starting on October 1, 2015, all claims with a date of service on or after October 1, 2015, will only be accepted if they contain valid ICD-10 codes. Our claims processing systems will not accept ICD-9 codes for dates of service after September 30, 2015, or accept claims that contain both ICD-9 and ICD-10 codes.

Understanding claims that span the compliance date

Depending on the type of claim, there are different rules for how to code a claim with dates of service that span the ICD-10 compliance date. Please refer to MLN Matters® Number: SE1408, a news flash published by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) with detailed information based on facility type/service, at *www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNMattersArticles/Downloads/SE1408.pdf*.

We encourage you to share this information with appropriate members of your staff.

Facility/Institutional inpatient claims

Facility/Institutional inpatient claims with a ***date of discharge*** on or before September 30, 2015, must be billed with ICD-9 codes. Facility/Institutional inpatient claims with a ***date of discharge*** on or after October 1, 2015, must be billed with ICD-10 codes. Do not split inpatient claims by date of service, and do not include both ICD-9 and ICD-10 codes on a single claim.

Professional and outpatient claims

Professional and outpatient claims with a ***date of service*** on or before September 30, 2015, must be billed using ICD-9 codes. Professional and outpatient claims with a ***date of service*** on or after October 1, 2015, must be billed using ICD-10 codes. We will not accept claims containing both ICD-9 and ICD-10 codes – as is consistent with CMS billing guidelines.

Referrals and authorizations

Independence Blue Cross (Independence) will not accept ICD-9 codes on any referrals, authorizations, or claims for dates of service on or after October 1, 2015. If your office submits an ICD-9 code after the compliance date, your referral, authorization, or claim will be denied and sent back to you for proper coding. Providers should work with their trading partners, clearinghouses, and billing vendors/billing software companies to ensure ICD-10 compliance and avoid claims rejections and processing delays.

Independence is ready for ICD-10

Independence has conducted thorough testing of our systems, which focused on minimizing potential business disruptions for our providers, aligning medical policies to ensure no changes in current policy-based outcomes, and verifying that services covered under ICD-9 will be covered under ICD-10.

Independence is confident with the outcome of our testing results so far, which show that both internal and external validation have been successful. We continue to encourage our providers to take time to train coders and concentrate on clean coding practices to make the transition to ICD-10 as successful as possible.

Stay informed

As the ICD-10 compliance date approaches, Independence will continue to communicate up-to-date, relevant information to our providers. We encourage you to frequently visit the following resources to review new information:

- **Independence ICD-10 web page:** *www.ibx.com/icd10*
- **Independence Provider News Center:** *www.ibx.com/pnc*
- **Independence NaviNet® Plan Central:** *www.navinet.net*