



# ICD-10.

## COMPLIANCE DATE OCTOBER 1, 2015

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### Lessons Learned: Reflections on CMS and the Successful Implementation of ICD-10

*By CMS Acting Administrator Andy Slavitt*

It was early 2015 and we had just gotten through a second successful season with HealthCare.gov, the turnaround that originally brought me into government, when the articles and letters started flying on our next big implementation – one that would affect nearly every physician and hospital in the country. And, anxiety levels were high.

On October 1, 2015, the U.S. health care system transitioned the way patient visits are coded from ICD-9 to the next version ICD-10, a system which sets the stage for meaningful improvements in public health. If people know about ICD-10 at all – and chances are they don't – it's probably from press reports about the more colorful diagnostic codes like "other contact with shark" or "burn due to water-skis on fire, subsequent encounter." More seriously, for people in the health care industry, it was being compared to Y2K, a transition with the potential to create chaos in the health care system.

One representative from the physician community told me that he was concerned that half of physicians in the country wouldn't be ready by the October 1 date. The thought of physicians in small, rural practices unable to run their practices had my complete attention. It also brought home that we are responsible for more and increasingly complex implementations – from HealthCare.gov to ICD-10 to new physician payment systems.

As I look to the future, great implementation is even more central to life at CMS.

In my time in D.C., I've come to see our role as implementing policies in a way that bring them to the kitchen table of the American family and to the clinics and facilities where they receive care. Implementation in this context is a vital responsibility. And there are millions of Americans that count on us to do it well: the senior filling his

prescription; the trustee of the community hospital; the parents of a child with disabilities in need of home resources; the doctor who drives for miles to take care of her patients in several rural communities.

[Read the full blog at CMS.gov.](#)

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