



## **HEAL Coalition ALERT: Coalition Members to Meet with Administration Regarding ICD-10 Implementation**

The Higher Education Allied Health Leaders (HEAL) Coalition continues to work with its members to respond to proposed changes that could have a significant impact on Medical Coding and Billing programs. The HEAL Coalition plans to engage in discussions with key officials within the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) regarding implementation of the tenth International Classification of Diseases protocol (ICD-10).

Because Congress was unable to complete action on Health IT legislation last year, CMS is currently working on a proposed rule that may require a mandatory nationwide conversion to the ICD-10 protocol by October 2010. However, a growing consensus suggests that the deadline would impose unrealistic demands on the health education field and should be postponed until 2012.

“We have responded to the concerns of our participating schools that some institutions may not have enough time to update and adjust their programs to reflect this nearly tenfold increase in billing codes,” HEAL Coalition Executive Director Tom Netting explained, adding: “Because regulatory action is imminent, we need to make sure that CMS considers the ‘human’ element – and all the re-training needed to absorb more than 200,000 billing codes – when developing the ICD-10 timeline.”

Board Chairman Mary Lyn Hammer praised HEAL's efforts to draw attention to this issue: “The strong relationships HEAL has among health policy-makers within the legislative and executive branches will ensure that the interests of our participating schools will be heard. We will continue to work with key stake-holders in both health and higher education in order to represent the interests of allied health schools in this important debate.”

If you are interested in joining us, would like more information regarding the HEAL Coalition, or wish to learn more about the ICD-10 issue, contact Executive Director Tom Netting at (202) 626-8553.