



HEAL Coalition ALERT: HEAL Coalition Providing a Voice for Allied Health Schools on ICD-10 Implementation

The Higher Education Allied Health Leaders (HEAL) Coalition has joined with other leading forces in health and higher education as part of a broad effort to weigh in on changes proposed by Congress that could have a significant impact on Medical Coding and Billing programs. Provisions in health IT legislation awaiting a House-Senate conference agreement could require a nationwide conversion to the tenth International Classification of Diseases protocol (ICD-10) by October 2010, and a growing consensus in the health community suggests that the deadline would impose unrealistic demands on the health education field and should be postponed until 2012.

"The ICD-10 standard presents a nearly tenfold increase in the amount of billing codes – from 24,000 to more than 200,000," HEAL Coalition Executive Director Tom Netting explained, while emphasizing the impact on Medical Billing and Coding programs: "Institutions will need to update and enhance their curricula, improve their own IT infrastructure, and re-train their own teaching staff – and we believe Congress needs to grant institutions more time to modify their programs in order to meet this massive change."

Congress is likely to draft final legislative language on health IT yet this year, and HEAL Coalition Board of Directors Chairman Mary Lyn Hammer said there was a strong impetus for action by the higher education community. "Higher Education Act reauthorization may not be completed this year, but there are other issues moving right now – like ICD-10 – that can impact schools of allied health a great deal. We continue to work with key stakeholders in health policy on this issue and other issues of common concern, so that proprietary schools of allied health have a seat at the table on important policy decisions."

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