



## **HEAL Coalition ALERT: HEAL Coalition, Community Colleges Join Forces on ICD-10 Implementation**

The Higher Education Allied Health Leaders (HEAL) Coalition and the American Association of Community Colleges have submitted a joint letter to Members of Congress regarding proposed changes that could have a significant impact on Medical Coding and Billing programs. Provisions in health IT legislation awaiting a House-Senate conference agreement would require a nationwide conversion to the tenth International Classification of Diseases protocol (ICD-10) by October 2010, and a growing consensus suggests that the deadline would impose unrealistic demands on the health education field and should be postponed until 2012.

“We are concerned that institutions will 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. He added: “Because this bill has a good chance of passing this year, we need to make sure that lawmakers consider the ‘human’ element – and all the re-training needed to absorb more than 200,000 billing codes – when arriving at a legislative deadline.”

Board Chairman Mary Lyn Hammer praised HEAL's efforts to draw attention to this issue: “ICD-10 sounds like an obscure issue, but its potential impact on schools is real – and our time to influence Congress is short. 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 on this important legislation.”

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.