



**5 KEY  
STEPS  
TO ADD TO  
YOUR ICD  
-10  
TRANSITION PLAN**

The mandated conversion to ICD-10 has the U.S. healthcare community bracing itself. This mandated change to medical coding represents one of the biggest changes private practices will face. Failure to design and execute a detailed, complete conversion plan will devastate a small practice.

No private practice can afford to risk the future by skipping critical steps in ICD-10 planning. Physicians can take steps now to protect themselves when the conversion deadline arrives.

Consulting and testing with trading partners and system providers will eliminate dramatic interruptions to office

workflow and payment. ADP, an established company with over 60 years of experience, is here to help you navigate the changes to medical coding. With AdvancedMD practice management and electronic health record software, you will have automation tools to survive the ICD-10 conversion and maximize your financial health.

## 5 steps to prepare for ICD-10

Implementing changes to accommodate the upcoming ICD-10 conversion will take careful planning and energy. Physicians understand the future of a practice relies on a complete, well-designed conversion plan.

Because ICD-10 changes the very structure of medical coding, all clinical and administrative systems that capture and report diagnosis codes will need modification. Updating your internal systems, then testing their compatibility, is no small task. You must also consider how your systems will interact with other stakeholders with whom you share data.

Connections with clearinghouses, payers, and billing services need to be evaluated and modified.

You may have already developed a preliminary conversion plan, but there is more work to be done, especially if you are running your practice in paper or client/server technology environments. Read five more steps you must take in ICD-10 conversion.

**“The future of a practice relies on a complete, well-designed conversion plan.”**



## Step 1

# Survey your current PM vendor

Consulting with your practice management (PM) vendor is a critical step in ICD-10 planning. Because PM systems are central to the daily operations of medical practices, consult with your current vendor right away.

Ask the right questions. First, inquire if your current PM software can be updated for the ICD-10 conversion and if you will need to make hardware changes. The update timeframe and your downtime are important aspects to consider: updates should be installed early to allow time for staff training and system testing.

Ask if ICD-10 conversion is included in the price of your current maintenance contract. Most vendors of client/server systems will charge for ICD-10 updates – this is how they make their money.

Review your current contract or speak to a representative to see if regulatory changes are included. Consider whether the expense to update client/server software really makes sense for your practice.

- Will your software accommodate dual coding of ICD-9 and ICD-10?
- How will you be able to submit after October 1, 2015?
- Will you be able to send and receive test transactions with ICD-10 codes?

If your current system is unable to accommodate the ICD-10 conversion, or if the cost to update it outweighs the benefit, you will need to purchase a new PM system. Begin researching right away. Introducing new PM software into your practice will require time for staff training and testing. to drive improvements for everyone in their network.

**“Internal and external systems must be compatible before the conversion deadline.”**

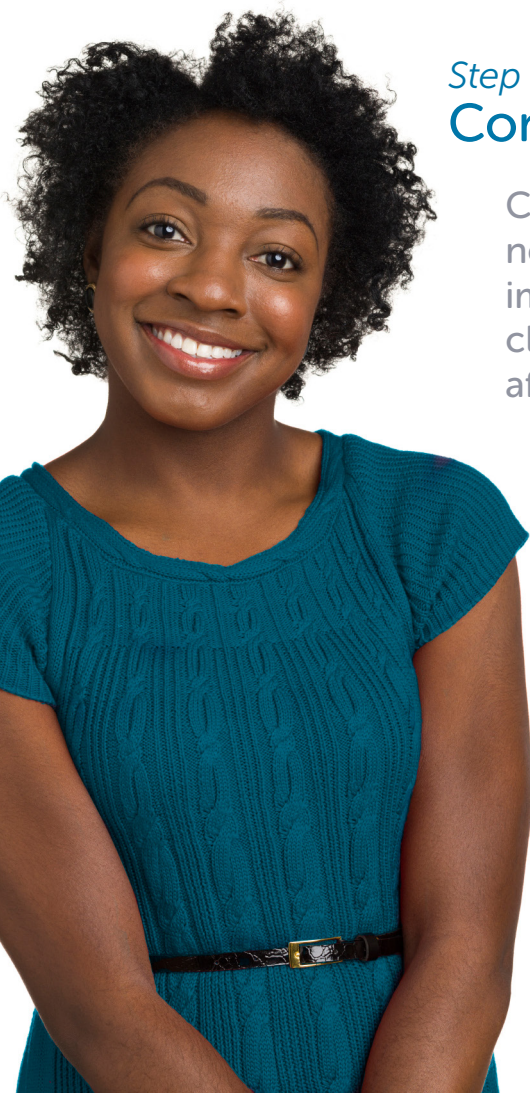
## Step 2

# Consult with your trading partners

Compatibility with trading partners is important with any new system or update. You will want to be aware of the implementation planning of all your trading partners (e.g. clearinghouses, payers) to prevent payment interruption after the deadline.

Just like with your PM vendor, ask the right questions. Ask when each partner plans to convert to ICD-10 and when their system will be available for testing – your systems must be compatible before the conversion deadline. When speaking with your payers, ask additional questions. Inquire if changes will be made to your contract based on the move to ICD-10. If so, allow yourself time for negotiation.

Be sure your trading partners are proactive in their own ICD-10 conversion plans. Taking the time to contact every trading partner may be the most important step to ensure your own ICD-10 transition goes smoothly. You need to know if your trading partners will continue to support your practice after the conversion deadline; for that reason, contact the biggest payers first.



### Step 3

## Test your internal office systems & functions

Many practices rely on many disparate systems to manage the daily operations of the office (information management, billing, scheduling). If you cannot effectively send information internally, the conversion will dramatically disrupt your workflow and your bottom line.

All systems must accommodate the ICD-10 codes. Identify which systems in your practice rely on ICD codes. Determine whether each system can be upgraded or it needs to be replaced. You will want to be sure that all systems interface smoothly before the conversion deadline. You may also want to consider investing in new internal software that provides an all-in-one solution for

your office rather than continuing to hassle with multiple systems.

Once you have made the necessary adjustments by installing new software and completing upgrades, test internally. An effective way to test your own systems is to trace the path of a typical visit and send data from each step a patient makes while in your office.

independent practices to meet payment reform requirements, cut costs for duplicate testing and redundant care, and ensure that physicians have the data they need at the point of care, to achieve the quality care goals some payment reforms will set. In order to do this, practices must

### Step 4

## Test with trading partners

Once you have completed the necessary research and implementation steps, it will be time to test with your trading partners.

Be sure to budget in the time to practice sending information from your system to the systems of your payers, clearinghouses, and billing services.

Sending test ICD-10 transactions is a critical step. For example, you will want to send a claim coded with ICD-10 to a payer to make sure your system sends it correctly and their system receives it successfully. Because ICD-10 codes are not approved for live transactions before the deadline, these transmissions will be done in a testing environment allowing time for adjustments in one or more of the systems.

Consult with your trading partners to establish a testing timeline. Ask which transactions you should test and when. Ideally, you should test each type of transactions with each trading partner. Because some practices have hundreds of trading partners, this may not be practical; identify your largest trading partners and focus testing efforts with them.



### Step 5

## Update & budget for any plan adjustments

Once you have spoken with vendors, consulted with trading partners, and tested both your internal and external systems, you will want to reevaluate your implementation plan. If you discovered that you need to make additional adjustments to systems, budget for the associated time and expense.

Starting this process early will give you a vital advantage if you find additional work needs to be done. Consider if the additional time and expense to update your current client/server system makes sense for your practice. If you find the cost outweighs the benefit, begin researching other technological solutions right away.



## Conclusion

Converting to ICD-10 will be no small feat; however, taking the time now to prepare will reduce headaches when the deadline arrives. Each step listed above will help streamline your own processes and improve your interactions with trading partners. Starting this process now will be your biggest asset as you may experience a time of trial and error.

It can't be overstated: without proper planning, the ICD-10 conversion will devastate a small practice. If your office is not ready for ICD-10, expect substantial interruption to workflow and payment. Protect your practice by taking the necessary steps now.

Maintaining your client/server software during ICD-10 conversion will demand a significant amount of time and energy – at a great cost. Now is the perfect time to consider upgrading your practice's legacy technology for a long-term solution. You can eliminate most of the steps above with AdvancedMD. We will take the hassles out of ICD-10 conversion so you can get back to what you do best – caring for your patients.

AdvancedMD provides the tools for a smooth ICD-10 conversion.

- Cloud infrastructure
- Integrated clearinghouse with no separate contracts or agreements
- Free, automated updates
- ICD-10 bi-directional data exchange between PM and EHR
- Continuous updates for industry codes, medical rules, and billing changes
- Automated rules compliance updates for HIPPA, regulatory requirements, and implementation deadlines

