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CMS Changes FY 2008/2009

*By: Carla Gaines, MPH, RHIA, CCS
Coding Mgr., Tallahassee Memorial Hospital*

CMS has finalized its plans to move ahead with the Medicare Severity (MS) DRG system, effective October 1, 2008. This change came despite some protests from influential organizations and groups, including the House of Representatives, who on July 19th voted in favor of an amendment to prevent CMS from implementing the payment cut, and also to delay implementation of MS-DRGs for one year.

The MS-DRG rule created 745 new severity-adjusted diagnoses related groups to replace the 538 DRGs that currently exist. This change also reduced the current CC list from 3,326 to 2,583 diagnoses codes. Currently, patients had at least one CC 77.7% of the time, under the MS-DRG system, this will be reduced to 40.3%. Additionally:

- Chronic diseases such as mitral valve prolapse, CHF, and stage I-III chronic renal failure were removed from the CC list unless there was a significant acute manifestation.
- Chronic blood loss anemia, dehydration, COPD, seizures, angina (413.9). atrial fibrillation, and hyperkalemia were also removed from the CC list.
- Ventricular fibrillation, cardiac arrest, cardiogenic shock, other shock without trauma, and respiratory arrest are excluded CCs if the patient expires during the admission.

With the collection of Present on Admission indicators beginning this year, CMS selected the following conditions for implementation that would be eliminated as CCs if they occurred after admission, effective FY 2009:

- Objects left in during surgery

- Air embolism
- Blood incompatibility
- Catheter associated UTI
- Decubitus ulcers
- Vascular catheter associated infections
- Surgical site infections-mediastinitis following CABG
- Falls

The bad news is that CMS realizes that as a result of these changes, hospitals will do everything within their power to improve the quality of coding and documentation. Therefore, CMS is implementing a corresponding 4.8% payment cut over a three-year period, including a 1.2% reduction for FY 2008 and proposed 1.8% reductions for FYs 2009 and 2010. This reduction is to offset the improved documentation and coding (and therefore payment) CMS anticipates will occur within the next three years.

Hospitals must be proactive in response to these changes and engage medical and coding staff to cooperatively document and report illness severity. This includes forming a multidisciplinary team including physicians, coders, case managers, HIM directors, Administration etc. with the primary goal of taking action and working as a team to make sure that the medical staff, coders and other supportive staff are informed of these changes, educated accordingly, and the public data is reflective of the severity of illness and quality of care administered to the patients.

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Impetus

*By: Alphonso Sanders, RHIT
e-Coastlines Chair*

Impetus can be defined as a driving force; stimulation or encouragement resulting in increased activity. There are many proven forms of positive prodding that have been tried over the years none more satisfying to those who love what they do and do what they love than the simple self-gratification of achieving goals or reaching personal bests.

Some characterize those who are driven as over-bearing, insatiable, or anal/meticulous. Sounds like and HIM professional. From Directors down to file clerks it takes special motivated personnel to work in the fast paced, ever rule changing, attention to detail department of Health Information. Some other key words that describe HIM professionals are indomitable, confident, and having a high level of determination. Determined to be better than expected, driven to accomplish all tasks, confident enough to accept any challenge, cautious enough to consider others along the way.

What inspires you? Love of what you do, a competitive nature, or some unexplainable intrinsic part of your personality. My grandfather once said to me, "If you become a street sweeper try and be the very best at it; and whatever you find to do with your hands do it with all your might." I later found that he borrowed the latter quote from the bible.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest. Ecclesiastes 9: 10 KJV

Impetus does not exempt from failure, set backs, or other unforeseen mishaps along the way. It will not however allow those who possess it to wallow in a puddle of self pity. It will pick you up dust you off and push you forward toward success.

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A Diamond In The Rough

***By: Elizabeth A. Whitmer, RHIT, FAAMT
President Southwest Region***

Anyone that is in the healthcare delivery profession, such as Health Information Managers and any affiliates, eventually learn that our jobs can be sometimes unpredictable.

Many of us have made serious job changes during our committed years of service to our employers. It is often difficult to leave a job after 10 years of service due to the changes that take place at facilities, whether they are hospitals or outpatient care settings.

I became one of those. After many years of committed service, I found myself in a very unstable work environment. When you witness a pyramid effect going down, you lose that sense of support and identify that it is time to move on. Many of you may be in the same position-do not give up. You will learn that with all of our education and years of experience there will be another opportunity waiting out there some place. We are definitely worth what our hard earned professions represent.

I discovered a "diamond in the rough". Further from home, very rural and exhibits a completely different environment.

My new job is located in Immokalee. My first greeting upon arrival at the front door was to "woosh" four chickens away from the front door so that I could get in-this was quite a greeting. After being here one month, you should have seen my facial expression, when I went out to my car in the parking lot and up ahead of it in the brush was my first wild pig. We made a pact, I wouldn't bother with him/her, and it wouldn't bother with me.

Although it is quite a drive from my home I feel it is well worth it. I now work for Collier Health Service, Inc. I am located at Marion E. Fether Health Medical Center. I listened to the needs of this facility and after thoroughly investigating and observing the situation; I made the decision to come on board with them.

Collier Health Services, Inc. is a private, not-for-profit "safety net" health care provider with 10 health care facilities located throughout Collier County. They offer basic primary and preventative medical and dental health services. The facilities include: the Marion E. Fether Medical Center, Children's Health Network, Immokalee Family Care Center, Golden Gate Dental Practice, Horizons Primary Care Center, and the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile. Collier Health Services was founded in 1977 through the collaborative efforts of community leaders for the purpose of improving the health of migrant and seasonal farm workers, rural poor, and other citizens of Collier County.

Under the leadership of Marion E. Fether, a dedicated Immokalee resident, these community leaders formed a board, which was the vehicle for developing a medical center that was eventually named after her. The commitment of the board was to provide basic medical and dental health care at an affordable cost. The first medical center started in Immokalee in a small building and two trailers. Initial services established at the medical center were: family medicine, pediatrics, women's health, dental health, and infectious diseases.

As the population of Immokalee grew, the need for a larger facility became necessary. The New Marion E. Fether Medical Center was completed in July 1993.

Expanded services were offered to include: laboratory and radiology, pharmacy, outreach and health education, social services support, transportation by bus and translation in Spanish and Creole.

I am so proud to be a part of this wonderful facility for the service it provides to the community of Collier County. For me, it has proven to be a "diamond in the rough" that continues to shine with its efficient, community-based network of caring professionals who assure the dignity and respect of each individual they serve. It is a wonderful feeling to go home each day knowing I have made a major contribution, through my profession as Director of Health Information, to so many patients' and staff that truly appreciate it. Let us not forget why we are here and what we are supposed to do with our lives to enrich the lives of others.

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Update from the FHIMA Leadership Conference -August 24th & 25th
By: Elizabeth Whitmer, RHIT, FAAMT
President Southwest Region

It was such a pleasure to gather with many of our regional leaders and board members at this years Leadership Conference in Tampa. Kudos to the board for having it in another location other than Orlando. Having been a board representative and regional leader for many years, this was the first time we were able to go out and explore new territory.

A special recognition to Lynn Jacek, RHIT a Northeast member who joined us upon our President's open invitation to all members. We hope you enjoyed your stay and found the whole experience eventful, fun and educational.

Looking back I think we could all call it a Mediterranean experience. After all, I did not know that there were 1045 different varieties of olives, and that number is constantly growing-I will leave that topic for later.

The Renaissance International Hotel in Tampa was exquisite, just five miles from downtown Tampa, this hotel opened in 2004, being eight stories high providing 293 guestrooms, and adjacent to it was the International Plaza with shopping galore and many dining choices. This attached mall offered you 200 stores and designer shops, 15 sit down restaurants, a concierge and visitor center, and a beach themed children's play area. Husbands were able to attend and entertain themselves and the kids while the wives were in meetings.

The inspiration that brought our unique hotel experience to life belonged to a couple called Sergio and Gabriella. A couple that came here from the Mediterranean Coast, where olives were plentiful, and decided to reside in Tampa.

The home they built here in Tampa was patterned after the resort mansions of the Costa del Sol. The heart of the mansion was the huge courtyard, an oasis filled with lush vegetation and olives. It was to be the perfect back drop for great parties or a quiet reflective moment by the fountain. Stone floors, hand glazed tiles, custom iron work, and Italian crystals, all imported from Europe, were incorporated into their masterpiece. Rich textures, sumptuous fabrics and trims adorned all the unique furniture, all designed to be exceedingly comfortable and timeless. One of a kind pieces of accent furniture and art, reflecting the Spanish, Italian, and Cuban heritages of Sergio and Gabriella were sprinkled throughout, making each room a delightful and memorable experience.

Now you know how the beauty of this hotel could leave you spell bound.

It was inevitable of course to say the least, but, we all should have had an in-service in Mediterranean Olives!!! There were bowls of olives in many strategically placed areas of the lobby for you to sample and learn the different varieties.

Our Leadership meeting started promptly on Friday at 1:00 p.m. in the Kalamata conference room. Yes, we were able to locate that olive and sample it as well. President Stacie Buck and President-Elect Dwan Thomas-Flowers gave us all a warm welcome and a fun icebreaker to loosen us up for an intense and informational conference. Everyone learned a little something about each other we may have never known previously. It was fun and entertaining.

Barbara Flynn our Chief Delegate presented on her experience at AHIMA Team Talks/Leadership informing us as to what AHIMA was up to and what it has planned for the coming year.

Pat Irerere, our Data Quality Committee Chairperson discussed the importance of our continuation of the Coding Roundtables and the importance of education and membership needs in this arena. She noted that if any region was currently doing any coding education it should be reported to her for documentation purposes to AHIMA.

Tina Slaughter-Allan from The Omnia Group kept us on our toes with the dynamics of leadership. Her presentation hit home to many of us and we need to exercise this knowledge. From what we learned from her presentation undoubtedly we should bring it back to our regions.

At that point the day was done and we were all ready to be let go and head for the International Plaza for shopping, dinner and fun. We were to convene early in the morning.

Saturday morning we began with a lovely continental breakfast. (This usually gets many of us to the convention room early). We had a very exciting day with Brian Higley, PHD and he entertained and fascinated us for two and a half hours learning the methods regarding leadership and how to overcome our regions most common barriers to getting things done. After filling our heads with interactive ideas that we role played and detailed on large pieces of paper, he moved us on to the "Execution" (just literally) to what we created by taking our groups many sheets of paper and downsizing it to a more definitive strategic plan. This allowed each work group to plan it in a way that maximized our regions time, energy and full potential.

Although exhausting, it was fun and we all had a reward of a delicious luncheon provided to us from FHIMA in the hotel. Then it was back to work again.

Brian Higley, PhD., was relentless and pushed us to the maximum. We once again broke into groups, laughed a lot and learned a great deal. It showed us how it all came together into a total strategic plan. It also revealed that our organization is about collaboration and winning through education. Winning education for ourselves and bringing back that winning education to our members.

Our President-Elect and President along with their board had a mission by bringing together these fine speakers to our Leadership Convention. It allows our regions to come together for another year to share our energetic commitment. To understand that all regions share a common bond and many of the same problems. We were even allowed to express our differences in opinion; however, our common goal was to best direct our resources and work together for the future of our organization. Ultimately, this is what our Leadership is all about.

We hope to see more of you next year at the Leadership Convention.

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