

PRESS RELEASE

The Health Council Announces ICD-10 Implementation

(Hamilton, Bermuda 15th May 2020) –The Health Council announced the health system’s move from the use of ICD-9 to the use of ICD-10 to communicate patient diagnoses between health professionals and health insurers.

In just over two weeks, ICD-10 will be the standard for medical diagnostic coding. The implementation of ICD-10 has been a phased process. It included training of local health professionals on the appropriate use of the new codes given the more specific classifications used in ICD-10, compared to the long-standing ICD-9. It also involved consultation with health professionals, health businesses and health insurers about their readiness to implement the use of ICD-10. While the majority expressed a high-level of preparedness to make that transition, in an effort to ensure all key players are on the same page and ready to advance together, the official implementation date was put on hold.

This new normal is critical as today’s data needs are dramatically different than they were 30 years ago when ICD-9 was introduced. Even though we are late to the global ICD-10 party, ICD-10 can help us in tremendous ways.

- ICD-10 offers greater detail and increased ability to use new technologies and procedures. The codes provide better data for evaluating and improving the quality of patient care.
- ICD-10 allows for better international comparisons of quality of care and the sharing of best practices globally. It is more effective at capturing public health diseases than ICD-9.
- ICD-10 allows for better injury research and trauma services evaluation. This includes better reporting on events such as road traffic accidents. It provides much-needed improvements in accurately classifying the nature of injuries and correlating them with cause, treatment, and outcome.
- The upgrade to ICD-10 offers providers and insurance companies better data in support of their efforts to improve performance, create efficiencies, and contain costs.
- ICD-10 data are more easily retrieved in electronic format than ICD-9 data. This is because the code set is more robust and up-to-date, it offers better mapping from SNOMED CT, a terminology used to capture the clinical detail of a care episode.

The Health Council has now received confirmation that all health businesses are prepared to make the switch on 1st June 2020; an update which has already been communicated to the health insurers, and health professional bodies and associations.

Tiara Carlington, *Project Manager, Public Health Research and Programmes*, noted: “The Health Council has a role in ensuring health system data is accurate, up-to-date and provides a reliable basis for system analyses and thus improvements. As we are seeing with COVID-19, accurate and up-to-date data is an essential tool in keeping people safe. Migration to ICD-10 has been long-awaited, and we welcome this progress toward making more informed health system decisions.”

The Health Council appreciates the collaboration with, and between health professionals and insurers and looks forward to continuing to work together in our collective pursuit of greater system efficiency and improved health outcomes.



As the country moves forward with ICD-10, the Health Council is also keeping an eye on the global progress on medical coding. It is understood that ICD-11 is currently early in its testing phases. The Health Council has been in communication with the Pan American Health Organization on being involved in piloting of ICD-11 and providing experience data back to their headquarters in Geneva. As Dr. Ricky Brathwaite, CEO of the Health Council, stated, "As much as possible, we always want to put ourselves in a position to lead. Even if we are not ready to be early adopters of innovations, it is important that we as a country have a consistent seat at the international table of health systems decision-making."

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About Bermuda Health Council

Established by the Bermuda Health Council Act 2004, the Bermuda Health Council ("Health Council") is tasked with regulating, coordinating and enhancing the delivery of health services in Bermuda. Led by a Board representing a broad range of sectors in Bermuda's community, and staffed by a team of committed professionals, the Health Council works with health system stakeholders towards achieving a quality, equitable and sustainable health system.