

What Tools Will You Need for the ICD-10 Transition? Q & A with Swiftaudit



October 1, 2015 is a date that looms large for everyone involved in the operational and financial functions of any medical practice. At the time of this post's publishing, practice administrators, managers, billers and coders have less than three months to make sure they have the processes and systems in place to minimize the business disruption from the changeover. As we talked to clients and readers about the challenges they are facing with the ICD-10 upgrade over the past several years, we started looking for tools that could help practices ease the transition.

One tool really stood out more than the others. [Swiftaudit Search](#) is a web-based coding conversion and look-up tool for both ICD-9 and ICD-10 code sets that we strongly endorse for its ability to supercharge ICD-10 coding, audits and upgrade preparations. We've been using Swiftaudit Search here at Manage My Practice for months now and we are very excited about how it can help our readers and clients.

We sat down with the creators of [Swiftaudit Search](#), Chicago's SpringSoft to ask them more about how practices can prepare for the upgrade.

Manage My Practice: Tell us about SpringSoft and how you starting working in the healthcare software market.

SpringSoft: We've provided software to the healthcare coding and compliance market since 1995. Our first product was E&M Coder™ for evaluation and management coding and audits. It all started when a few forward thinking doctors told us "the auditors are coming." Given our background in corporate business systems, our research provided a couple of interesting observations at that time. One – physician offices had few easy to use software applications. Two – from a business point of view, physician offices needed help with coding and compliance. So we tackled a challenging little-understood coding issue in 1994 – the introduction of evaluation and management codes.



Manage My Practice: Your product that is designed for medical coding has gone through several iterations since the ICD-10 mandate was first announced – how did your product evolve?

SpringSoft: We started designing what is now [Swiftaudit Pro](#) several years ago. As we designed the coding components, we realized that our ICD-10 Search features would benefit physicians during the transition to ICD-10. Again, we took on a daunting challenge. We knew we had to design an intuitive ICD-10 Search Feature. Once you find a group of codes, the next problem was to be present all of the ICD-10 coding information to describe the patient's health condition. So now, as Swiftaudit evolves, our goal is to present the ICD-10 coding guidelines in a quick and straightforward way.



Manage My Practice: We've seen a wide variety of encoder-type products designed for hospitals and large organizations, and some designed for billing companies and consultants. What

target market is the best fit for your products and why?

SpringSoft: Currently, we see our market as physician offices. Hospital and large organization coding systems have to address 'packet' coding, such as DRG (Diagnosis Related Groups) and HCCs (Hierarchical Condition Categories). Hospitals and large organizations will benefit from our auditing platform – SwiftAudit Pro. Providers who need to code ICD-10s will benefit from Swiftaudit Search. They can use our product to learn how code their common ICD-9 diagnosis in ICD-10 language.



Manage My Practice: What do you hear are the biggest challenges faced by practices in making the transition to I-10?

SpringSoft: We hear that immediacy and time are the biggest challenges. **Immediacy** – it is always easier to learn new methods when you can consistently work in the new method. A baseline understanding helps provide context and what the changes are. We will all learn when everyone starts coding in ICD-10. **Time** – the change to ICD-10 is not trivial. It impacts the office's income. Everyone will need to spend a little more time – coding in ICD-10, and time in improving their coding as payers respond to codes submitted. A practice can reduce frustration if they understand and prepare for their learning curve. Like all new methods, it takes practice to perfect.



Manage My Practice: For many practices, their ability to utilize ICD-10 will come down to the support the EHR or Practice Management vendor has built into the software, yet

many practices have not even seen how their software will work with ICD-10. What do recommend for practices whose software has not yet been updated to I-10, or whose software makes no useful correlation between I-9 and I-10?

SpringSoft: We agree with many consultants and trainers. Transition your top ICD-9 codes to specific ICD-10 codes. Be cautious of depending on published crosswalks. ICD-9s which describe 'unspecified' elements often are crosswalked to 'unspecified' ICD-10s. Experts in the industry are cautioning that 'unspecified' ICD-10s may not be paid. Ask your EMR vendor, will you handle all of the ICD-10 coding guidelines, such as Code First, Code Also, Use Additional Codes? Will you map to 'unspecified' ICD-10 codes or warn me of 'unspecified' ICD-10 codes? How will you help me find more specific codes? You can use [Swiftaudit Search](#) to build your Favorites Lists. We will provide you the ICD-10 coding guidelines, and provide a communication platform for your expert coders to provide you with coding tips and alerts.



Manage My Practice: What are some of the features in Swiftaudit Search that your product has that others you've seen do not?

SpringSoft: We feel that our ease of use and screen design makes us stand out from the crowd. The ICD-10 code set is overwhelming. We've worked very hard to provide the information you need at a glance.



Manage My Practice: Swiftaudit Pro (as opposed to Swiftaudit Search) is more for the coding and billing side of the

practice. How do you see coders and billers using this product in their practices?

SpringSoft: Our background is in coding and compliance. Managers and auditors can use Swiftaudit Pro to improve their coding accuracy and educate their providers. We built Swiftaudit Pro to be a communication platform to aid discovery and process improvement between a practice's providers and expert coders.

Readers who would like more information or would like to try Swiftaudit Search for free for 30-days can [click here](#).

NOTE: We've heard of so many practices that have not started preparations for ICD-10 that that we made the 20-minute webinar ["ICD-10 CM: Getting Started Today."](#) The video addresses strategies for the first step – crosswalking your most used ICD-9 codes into ICD-10.

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