

Antonios selected as regional ICD-10 expert

By Via Christi Health



Sam Antonios, MD, has been selected by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to help area medical practices make the transition to ICD-10.

ICD-10 is a classification system implemented by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1993 to replace ICD-9, which they developed in the 1970s. Accounting for modern advances in clinical treatment and medical devices, ICD-10 codes offer many more classification options compared to those found in predecessor ICD-9. U.S. healthcare regulators will require ICD-10 compliance on Oct. 1.

“Making the conversion can seem daunting, so it’s important that physicians know that there are people who can assist and guide them,” said Antonios, Via Christi Health’s director of Information Systems. Antonios is volunteering his time to assist practices in Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Iowa because he believes that peer-to-peer discussions with other physicians can improve readiness.

“It’s not an easy topic for physicians, but it’s an important one because if you’re a practice and you’re not ready, you won’t be able to submit claims. That’s an immediate cash flow problem,” he said.

Via Christi has been preparing for the ICD-10 changes since 2013 and Antonios estimates that Via Christi has completed approximately 90 percent of what is needed in order to meet the Oct. 1 deadline.

CMS has recruited volunteers like Antonios to help smaller practices that may be struggling with the ICD-10 conversion.

“I don’t want physicians to close their practices because they weren’t ready,” said Dr. Antonios. “So many of our patients depend on small- to medium-sized physician practices for their care.”