The International Classification of Diseases (ICD)

The ICD is the international standard diagnostic classification for all general epidemiological purposes, many health management purposes and clinical use. These include the analysis of the general health situation of population groups and monitoring of the incidence and prevalence of diseases and other health problems in relation to other variables such as the characteristics and circumstances of the individuals affected, reimbursement, resource allocation, quality, and guidelines.

It is used to classify diseases and other health problems recorded on many types of health and vital records including death certificates and health records. In addition to enabling the storage and retrieval of diagnostic information for clinical, epidemiological and quality purposes, these records also provide the basis for the compilation of national mortality and morbidity statistics by WHO (World Health Organization) Member States.

Defining ICD-10-CM/PCS

ICD-10-CM/PCS consists of two parts:

**ICD-10-CM** – The diagnosis classification system developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for use in all United States (U.S.) health care treatment settings. Diagnosis coding under this system uses 3–7 alpha and numeric digits and full code titles, but the format is very much the same as ICD-9-CM; and

**ICD-10-PCS** – The procedure classification system developed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for use in the U.S. for inpatient hospital settings only. The new procedure coding system uses 7 alpha or numeric digits while the ICD-9-CM coding system uses 3 or 4 numeric digits.

The new classification system provides significant improvements through greater detailed information and the ability to expand to capture additional advancements in clinical medicine.

**Our area of focus will be ICD-10-CM.**

ICD-10-CM far exceeds its predecessors in the number of concepts and codes provided. To date, the number of ICD-10-CM codes reaches nearly 70,000 while the number of ICD-9 codes is less than 14,000. The disease classification has been expanded to include health-related conditions and to provide greater specificity at the sixth and seventh character level. **The sixth and seventh characters are not optional** and are intended for use in recording the information documented in the clinical record.

As a reminder; Diagnosis codes translate the written word that is documented in the clinical record to a descriptive code. The diagnosis code cannot be any more or less descriptive than the clinical record; it must be an exact match.