

Health Law Network, Inc.

Healthcare Compliance & Reimbursement Consulting Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

New Compliance Audit Service for Electronic Health Records

Orlando, FL – February 22, 2014 – At the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) 2014 Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida, Michael Stearns, MD, CPC, and Health Law Network (HLN) announced a new compliance audit service that will address concerns over inaccurate Evaluation and Management (E/M) CPT coding practices associated with the use of Electronic Health Records (EHRs).

When properly designed and used, automated coding tools within EHRs can markedly improve the accuracy of E/M coding and improve efficiency. However, many healthcare providers and government investigators are now realizing that EHR design flaws, inadequate implementations and a lack of training may lead to documentation and coding inaccuracies and fraudulent billing.

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) of the Department of Health and Human Services is targeting the role of EHRs in generating potentially false claims in 2014¹. Complicating this issue is the fact that there are no certification processes or standards for how EHRs are to assist providers with E/M coding. Also, a recent report found a number of deficiencies associated with the design and use of E/M coding tools within a number of leading EHRs². HLN's founder, Lamar Blount, said, "We recognized that hospitals and physicians need expertise to minimize their compliance risks. E/M coding is one of the most difficult areas, so we are tackling that first."

To help healthcare providers respond to E/M coding compliance risks, HLN started in 2013 to research possible ways to help their clients identify and reduce their E/M compliance risks. HLN recruited two nationally recognized CPT coding and physician medical billing experts to design a new compliance audit service for electronic health records. Michael Stearns, MD, CPC, a physician informaticist and health information technology consultant, and Susan Garrison, CPC, CHC, CCS-P, CPAR, CPC-H, Executive Director of the Association of Health Care Auditors and Educators (AHCAE) have worked with HLN over the past several months to develop a compliance service that combines CPT coding skills and EHR systems expertise.

HLN's new EHR Compliance Audit provides senior medical coding and electronic health record professionals to perform in-depth assessments of EHRs used by hospitals, ambulatory facilities and physicians. HLN's clients are provided specific recommendations that will optimize their E/M coding compliance, and it is tailored to the features of each client's EHR system. HLN's services will include best usage of the EHR product, EHR settings and content customization, education to providers and coding professionals, and documentation recommendations.

About Health Law Network: Health Law Network is an Atlanta-based firm that consults with providers and healthcare attorneys on issues of proper reimbursement, clinical documentation, accuracy of coding and quality of care, allegations of false claims, and Medicare or Medicaid fraud. For more information, see <http://www.HLNetwork.com> or contact Lamar Blount, President, office phone (770) 645-5989.

1. Michael Stearns, "EHRs and E/M Coding: Warnings, Pitfalls and Best Practices," *Healthcare Business Monthly (formerly the Cutting Edge)* December, 2014: 56.
2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, "Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2014," accessed February 20, 2014, <http://oig.hhs.gov/reports-and-publications/archives/workplan/2014/Work-Plan-2014.pdf>