

1849 The Exchange
Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30339
678.303.9290
800.282.0224
Fax 678.303.3732
www.mag.org



Medical
Association
of Georgia

Building a Better State of Health Since 1849

July 14, 2015

Representative Tom Price, M.D.
100 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Price:

As the leading voice for physicians in every specialty and practice setting in the state, the Medical Association of Georgia (MAG) applauds you and Rep. Marsha Blackburn for introducing H.R. 3018 to allow physicians and their practices to use either the ICD-9 or ICD-10 codes for a six-month transition period once the ICD-10 codes go into effect on October 1.

MAG supports this legislation because it will give large numbers of physicians and practice staff the additional time they need to overcome a number of technical and operational challenges that they face to make the transition to the ICD-10 codes – not to mention the significant costs, which the American Medical Association and Nachimson Advisors have placed at between \$200,000 and \$8 million per practice.

But most important, MAG supports H.R. 3018 because it will enable physicians to remain focused on delivering the best possible care to their patients.

The ICD-10 transition represents one of the largest and most complicated efforts in U.S. health care history. It will require physicians and their staff to contend with some 68,000 diagnosis codes versus the 13,000 that are used today. And using the ICD-10 codes to determine how much providers get paid in every health care setting and by every health care payer is somewhat disconcerting since that has never been done anywhere in the world – so it is essential that we collectively get this right.

Also keep in mind that physicians and practice staff are being asked to assume this burden at the same time that they are grappling with other onerous federal mandates, including the EHR “meaningful use” requirements and the Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS).

MAG supports H.R. 3018 because it will give the large number of physicians and practices that are struggling with the ICD-10 codes a much better chance of successfully making the transition while they remain focused on delivering the best possible care to their patients.

Thank you for your leadership – and thank you for being an advocate for American physicians and patients.

Please contact MAG Executive Director Donald J. Palmisano Jr. at 678.303.9290 or dpalmisano@mag.org in the event you have any questions or in the event MAG can assist you and Rep. Blackburn in your advocacy efforts.

Sincerely,

Manoj H. Shah, M.D.
President