



# THE ROAD TO ICD-10

## LATERALITY

Laterality has been added to ICD-10-CM to increase specificity. However, it is not a requirement for every condition that could encompass a left, right, or bilateral site. For example, a congenital megaureter does not require laterality specification for coding and reporting purposes.

Conditions such as fractures, burns, neoplasms, and pressure ulcers require documented evidence of the affected side of the body.

Documentation of laterality for bilateral body parts and paired organs will assist in expediting the billing and payment process.

**Laterality is one of the main reasons ICD-10 experiences such a large increase in the number of codes as a general. Non-specific ICD-9 codes would identify the disease or condition, but provide no information on the position or site of that condition.**

**As an example, ICD-9 may identify a condition/disease of the ovary in only one code. ICD-10 allows us the ability to capture and identify within four codes: unspecified ovary, right ovary, left ovary, or bilateral condition of the ovaries.**

**In this way, laterality allows the full capture of the condition leading to enhanced capture of severity of illness and specific data to be used in research and studies. In many cases, it only requires the documentation of one or a few additional words.**