Strategies to Improve External Cause of Injury Coding

An Update on National Initiatives

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Today’s Presentation

- Issues and challenges
- Current national initiatives
- What you can do to help!
External Cause Codes:
The Basics

- Also known as “E-codes” in ICD-9
- Info on mechanism, intent, and location of injury
- Info can be used to monitor, plan, implement and evaluate injury prevention programs
The Challenge:
Variability in the Quantity and Quality of E-coding

- Not mandatory in many states
- Not required for reimbursement
- Some data collection systems lack designated fields
- Insufficient documentation limits ability to assign a specified E-code
- Lack of resources for on-going quality assurance
- Feds have suggested eliminating external cause codes in adoption of ICD-10-CM
Get Ready for Alphabet Soup!
A Team Effort: Many National Organizations . . .

- **APHA-ICEHS** (American Public Health Association, Injury Control and Emergency Health Services Section)
- **CSTE** (Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists)
- **NCHS** (National Center for Health Statistics)
- **NCIPC** (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, at CDC)
- **STIPDA** (State and Territorial Injury Prevention Directors Association)
- **SAVIR** (Society for the Advancement of Violence and Injury Research)
- **ASTHO** (Association of State and Territorial Health Officers)
- **NAHDO** (National Association of Health Data Organizations)
- **CSN** (Children’s Safety Network)

-- and others
with a Common Goal!

- High quality morbidity data coded for external cause of injury for all states and territories
  - Increasing the availability of E-codes in HDDS and HEDDS
  - Increasing the use of specified E-codes
  - Increasing the accuracy of E-coding
WECCI
(Workgroup for External Cause Coding Improvement)

• Established in 2006 from APHA-ICEHS

• Reps from many organizations
  - CSTE, APHA, ASTHO, NAHDO, NCIPC, NCHS, STIPDA, SAVIR, CSN, Tufts University, Minnesota DPH

• Compile a toolbox for states to improve E-coding without a mandate

• Explore possible mandate for Medicare/Medicaid reimbursement
APHA-ICEHS, 2007
(Injury Control and Emergency Health Services Section)

- Policy statement
  - All states should require E-codes in HDD
  - UHDSS and UB procedures should require the submission of E-codes
  - Data quality assurance programs should be developed and implemented at the state level
  - National organizations should be encouraged to endorse the APHA policy
  - CDC to provide leadership for a national strategy
What has resulted from APHA-ICEHS efforts?

- Draft policy statement presented to other organizations for their adoption
  - STIPDA, CSTE, SAVIR, ASTHO
- NCIPC and NCHS have agreed to provide leadership
- CDC workgroup; MMWR article
MMWR Recommendation Report
March 2008

- Discusses the need for high quality E-coded data for injury surveillance and prevention
- Highlights efforts in a few states
- Provides recommendations for next steps

MMWR Recommendation Report
March 2008

• Recommendations in three major areas:
  • Improve communication among stakeholders regarding E-codes
  • Improve collection of E-codes
  • Improve the usefulness of E-coded data for injury prevention efforts
MMWR Recommendation Report
March 2008, Selected Recommendations

- CDC to facilitate a state/federal effort
- Explore linking E-coding to reimbursement
- CDC, CSTE, STIPDA, others to develop uniform methods to improve E-coding and to do QA
- CDC, CSTE, STIPDA, others to develop training curricula for medical/records staff
- State programs to highlight injury as a public health concern and to increase awareness of the need for E-coded data
Send policy statement to other national organizations for endorsement

Send policy statement to the state agencies responsible for HDD/HEDD

Engage state health departments/agencies

Advocate where needed to assist NCIPC and NCHS

Publish an article in APHA’s “The Nation’s Health”
Uniform Billing Form - UB 04

- Form for Medicare and Medicaid billing
- Expansion to three designated (but voluntary) fields to report E-codes
  - Immediate cause
  - Precipitating cause
  - Place of occurrence
- Each state can decide whether or not to use
Sue Gallagher presented to NSC and corporate partners in February 2008
  - Off the job safety programs

State NSC reps encouraged to:
  - Promote this issue among their stakeholders
  - Collaborate with state STIPDA reps; get background info

NSC requested talking points/brochure
What You Can Do!

- Know the specifics for your state
- Review the MMWR article
- Collaborate with your state NSC rep
- Encourage your state organization responsible for collecting HDD and HEDD to use UB-04
- Use your data and provide feedback to E-code “providers”
- Support the efforts of CDC, WECCI, APHA-ICEHS, NSC and others
Some of the Many Advocates for Improved External Cause Coding!

- **Sue Gallagher** (APHA ICEHS, WECCI, SAVIR, Tufts University)
- **Lois Fingerhut** (NCHS, WECCI)
- **J. Lee Annest** (NCIPC, WECCI)
- **Mel Kohn** (CSTE, WECCI, Oregon Dept. of Human Services)
- **Renee Johnson** (NCIPC)
- **Jon Roesler** (CSTE, Minnesota Dept. Public Health)

Thank you!