



For Immediate Release

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HHS DEADLINE APPROACHES

ALBUQUERQUE, NM. May 12, 2003. Health industry organizations and practitioners have less than three weeks to secure rights to use ABC codes in electronic data interchange (EDI) transactions. Those that register at www.alternativelink.com by May 29, 2003, can secure trading partners among more than 10,000 registrants already planning to test and implement ABC codes. Those that do not register or identify trading partners by this important cutoff date will lose rights to conduct electronic commerce using ABC codes for the next two years, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Potential trading partners include

- top 20 and other commercial health plans;
- leading Medicare Plus Choice, Medicaid and military health plans;
- healthcare organizations, such as hospital systems, subacute care facilities, preferred provider organizations and independent practice associations;
- administrative and claims-related businesses;
- fully and self-insured employers;
- academic institutions with complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) and nursing programs;
- software application developers and other healthcare technology companies; and
- thousands of alternative medicine, nursing and other integrative healthcare practitioners.

Registration is free. Those who enroll at www.alternativelink.com prior to the extended HHS registration deadline of May 29, 2003, can gain discounts on essential ABC coding resources including

1. an *ABC Coding Manual for Integrative Healthcare*,
2. a *Practitioner's Guide to Billable Interventions Using ABC Codes*, and
3. a customized patient encounter form or *Superbill for Integrative Healthcare*.

Earlier this year, HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson authorized commercial use and evaluation of ABC codes as a proposed modification to the nation's HIPAA transaction and code set standards. The codes describe alternative medicine, nursing and other integrative healthcare practices and fill gaps in CPT and HCPCS II codes, two of the nation's older coding standards.

An explanation of ABC codes and HIPAA transactions can be obtained at 410.786.4160 (Eastern Time) through the CMS Office of HIPAA Standards.

Alternative Link (www.alternativelink.com) is the original developer of ABC codes. The New Mexico based company works in collaboration with The Foundation for Integrative Healthcare (www.fihc.org) and Relative Value Studies, Inc. (www.rvsdata.com), in pioneering coding tools, processes and systems for integrative healthcare. The Company provides information products and consulting services that help health-promoting organizations and practitioners finance, administer and deliver cost-effective care that improves individual health, industry efficiencies and socioeconomic development.