



Health IT Standards Committee

A Public Advisory Body on Health Information Technology to the National Coordinator for Health IT

July 29, 2013

Farzad Mostashari, MD, ScM
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Dr. Mostashari,

The HIT Standards Committee's (HITSC) Vocabulary Task Force prepared a recommendation on dental vocabularies. The recommendation was presented to the HITSC on December 19, 2012 and accepted for transmittal to the National Coordinator.

Background

The Systematized Nomenclature of Medicine, Clinical Terms (SNOMED CT), which encompasses the Systematized Nomenclature of Dentistry (SNODENT), includes terminology for the findings and disorders related to dentistry. However, SNOMED CT does not include the terminology for documenting dental procedures. The Current Dental Terminology (CDT) code set is necessary for documenting all the dental procedures. CDT is required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act for reporting dental services.

The Dental Quality Alliance (DQA) was established by the American Dental Association (ADA) to develop performance measures for oral health care.¹ Currently, the DQA is developing dental performance measures that include SNOMED CT codes and CDT codes. The ADA is also mapping SNODENT to ICD-9, ICD-10 and CDT so that there will be standardized mappings available for dentistry.

Recommendation

Current Dental Terminology (CDT) should be adopted as a required vocabulary for certified EHR technology to support meaningful use Stage 2. The ADA's mapping, detailed above, should be made available to electronic health record vendors and implementers, through the National Library of Medicine (NLM), as "convenience subsets."²

Sincerely yours,

/s/

Jonathan Perlin
Chair, Health IT Standards Committee

/s/

John Halamka
Vice Chair, Health IT Standards Committee

¹ The DQA is an organization of major stakeholders in oral health care delivery that use a collaborative approach to develop oral health care measures. Here is a link to the DQA information: <http://www.ada.org/5105.aspx>.

² To our knowledge, the mappings that are currently available from the NLM or the International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation for SNOMED to ICD do not include anything related to dentistry.