



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF  
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS

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The Tom Coburn  
United States Senate  
172 Russell  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Coburn:

On behalf of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS), which represents over 18,000 board-certified orthopaedic surgeons, I would like to express support for *The Cutting Costly Codes Act of 2013* (S. 972). S. 972 would prohibit the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services from replacing the current ICD-9 diagnostic code set with ICD-10. We believe that ICD-10 would be both costly to implement and would detract from patient care with very little benefit.

The differences between ICD-9 and ICD-10 are substantial. The ICD-10 diagnosis code set has 68,000 codes – a five-fold increase from the approximately 13,000 diagnosis codes currently in ICD-9. The estimated implementation cost of ICD-10 is between \$83,000 and \$2.7 million, depending on the size of the practice. The prospect of the tremendous administrative and financial burdens of transitioning to the new code set is overwhelming our physicians. This is compounded by the already on-going threat of Medicare physician payment cuts due to the flawed sustainable growth-rate formula, including a 24.4 percent cut on January 1, 2014, along with the two percent deficit reduction sequester cut that is currently in place.

We believe that prohibiting the transition to ICD-10 will enable physicians and other stakeholders to assess an appropriate alternative to such a burdensome, regulatory requirement and help to reduce costs weighing on physician practices, as well as help to keep new, more efficient models of health care delivery and payment on track.

Sincerely,

Joshua J. Jacobs, MD  
President  
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons

Cc: Thomas Barber, MD, Chair, AAOS Council on Advocacy  
Karen L. Hackett, FACHE, CAE, AAOS CEO