

Turning to the cloud for HIPAA 5010 and ICD-10 compliance

BY TOM SULLIVAN, *Contributing Writer*

Distant thunder rumbles across the HIPAA 5010 and ICD-10 horizon. That's the sound of cloud computing services gliding toward healthcare organizations. Cloud computing has already caught on in other facets of healthcare IT – and as providers and payers prepare to meet the pending mandates, hosted services could prove a viable option.

Whether called cloud computing or Software-as-a-Service (SaaS), the hosted model “certainly provides some potential for organizations dealing with both HIPAA 5010 and ICD-10 conversion efforts,” explains Kent Sacia, a principal and healthcare technology consultant at Milliman. “SaaS can provide a distinct advantage to organizations dealing with many changes, such as regulations. The model is lightweight to the end-user client and consolidates change requirements into functional models that are independent of the clients own IT processes.”

Indeed, HIPAA 5010 and ICD-10 vendors are starting, albeit slowly, to tout cloud computing services. When 3M Health Information

Systems and The TriZetto Group inked a partnership in mid-March under which TriZetto will inject 3M's ICD-10 Code Translation Tool into its own TriZetto Advantage 10 Services, the companies said that two new services harnessing 3M's tools will become available in the second quarter of this year, as SaaS-style applications. In an interview with *ICD10Watch*, HighPoint Solutions vice president of healthcare, Pam Ruebelmann, revealed the company's intent to issue this summer a pre-release version of an ICD-10 appliance, the functionality of which HighPoint is also considering offering as a cloud-based service. And Precyse Solutions newly-appointed director of ICD-10 program management and compliance, Cortnie Simmons, says that Precyse is working to make a range of coding tools and natural language processing technologies available as SaaS wares.

As providers and payers either upgrade services, such as business intelligence and analytics, around a core administration platform or replace legacy applications to meet HIPAA 5010 and ICD-10 mandates, cloud resources will be attractive in some instances.

Healthcare organizations, for instance, “could use a SaaS service to model the impact of ICD-10 and provider contracts,” says Greg Larson, TriZetto's associate vice president of services product management. “Few payers will invest in episodic solutions like this because they don't use it everyday, but a SaaS model provides the ideal on-demand environment for a payer to evaluate contracts as needed.”

Contract modeling is one area ripe for the cloud's fluidity, and a service that TriZetto will offer, but it is hardly the only potential resource for HIPAA 5010 and ICD-10 that will emerge as healthcare organizations scramble to comply with 5010 by January 1, 2012 and ICD-10 by October 1, 2013 – and more vendors will likely turn to the cloud to better meet prospective and existing customers' demands.

“As we see more core processing efforts achieved on the cloud, it is natural to offer these functional-based extensions,” Milliman's Sacia explains. “I suspect we will see more cloud-based translation and simulation offerings for both providers and payers in the next 12 months.” ■



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