



November 2014



## Employee Spotlight



### Gloria H., RHIA, MS

Gloria is from the Philadelphia, PA area. She is an Registered Health Information Administrator and holds both an undergraduate degree in Health Information Management and a graduate degree in Health Informatics from Temple University, Philadelphia, PA. She has 20 years of experience in HIM, including work as an Electronic Health Record Implementation Administrator, Regional / Director of HIM, HIPAA Privacy, Oncology Program Management, RAC-CMS Denial Management and HIM Long-term Care Consultant. Her

director-level experience with medical records includes acute care, long-term care, and behavioral healthcare settings.

## Ask the Expert

### The Challenge to Fight ALS

Do you recall this summer's ice bucket challenge? What was the challenge? Donate \$100 to the ALS foundation or have a bucket of ice water poured on you. Numerous videos flooded the Internet with folks who chose to have a bucket of ice water poured on their head to raise money and awareness for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). Most people generously chose to do both (some far exceeding the \$100 donation), and passed along the challenge to others. The result? Millions of dollars were raised to support research of ALS—most commonly known as Lou Gehrig's Disease. What is this famous, yet rare disease?

ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) is a disease that progresses rapidly and attacks the motor neurons (nerve cells) in the spinal cord and lower brain. The motor neurons are responsible for transmitting messages from the brain to the voluntary muscles throughout the body and muscle strength. ALS causes the motor neurons to degenerate or die, leading to progressive paralysis.

It's important to note, muscles in the digestive system and the heart are involuntary—controlled by the autonomic nervous system—and, therefore, not affected, along with the structures of the senses (sight, touch, hearing, taste and smell). "As the disease progresses, muscle weakness and atrophy spreads throughout the body. In later stages the disease weakens the diaphragm (muscle controlling the respiratory system, and eventually patients must depend on a ventilator."

"The cause of ALS is not known. According to researchers, the suspected causes include viruses, protein deficiencies, genetic defects (especially in familial ALS), heavy metals, neurotoxins (especially in Guamanian ALS), immune-system abnormalities, and enzyme abnormalities."

While there is no known cure for ALS, treatment includes medication for the discomforts associated with certain symptoms. Some patients may benefit from certain rehabilitation services, including physical and occupational therapy, speech therapy, and various assistive devices."

## Have a Healthy and Safe Family Gathering

By: CDC.gov editorial staff

If you are planning or participating in a family gathering, follow these tips to make sure your get-together is safe and healthy.

### Plan a healthy menu

Serve food and drinks that are low in calories, sugar, salt, fat, and alcohol. Include a variety of fruits and vegetables, which provide essential vitamins and minerals, fiber, and other substances that are important for good health, and also may reduce the risk of chronic diseases.

As you plan and prepare healthy meals, follow this recipe for food safety to help avoid harmful foodborne bacteria:

- **Clean:** Wash produce and remember to wash your hands with soap and water before preparing food.
- **Separate:** Don't cross-contaminate one food with another.
- **Cook:** Cook meat, poultry, and eggs thoroughly.
- **Chill:** Refrigerate leftovers promptly.
- **Report:** Report suspected foodborne illnesses to your local public health department.

### Move together

Plan activities to include walking, hiking, dancing, or other things to get the body moving. You can socialize and stay fit at the same time. Pick fun physical activities to do together, and enjoy the health benefits.

Children and adolescents should do 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day. Adults need at least 2½ hours of moderate-intensity activity every week.

### Know and share your family health history

It is also a good time to share family history—people, events, places, and dates. Why not share your family health history too?

A family health history is a written or graphic record of the diseases

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## Employee of the Month

November 2014



**Felicia Thomas**  
*Sr. Compliance Auditor*

Felicia is a Senior Compliance Auditor. She specializes in inpatient coding, DRG assignment/auditing and clinical documentation improvement. She has more than 20 years of healthcare experience. Felicia assists with DRG assessments, audits, follow-ups and coding validations to assure compliance with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) rules and regulations.

### Main Article *(Continued from page 1)*

and health conditions present in your family. You can't change your genes, but you can change behaviors that affect your health, such as smoking, inactivity, and poor eating habits. People with a family history of chronic disease (for instance, cancer, diabetes, or coronary heart disease) may have the most to gain from making such lifestyle changes.

#### Travel smart

No matter the distance you are traveling, keep these tips in mind:

- Avoid drinking and driving.
- Make sure adults and children are buckled up in motor vehicles.
- If you're taking a cruise, check ship inspection scores.
- If you're traveling internationally, make sure you've had all appropriate vaccinations for your destination. Check out travel notices about current health issues related to specific destinations.

#### Go green

Be conscious of the environment—and help sustain it for future generations. Whenever possible, recycle items from your gathering.

This article can be found here: <http://www.cdc.gov/features/FamilyGathering/>

### Ask the Expert *(Continued from page 1)*

#### Three Forms of ALS

- Sporadic: The most common form of ALS in the United States – 90 to 95% of all cases.
- Familial: Occurring more than once in a family lineage (genetic dominant inheritance) accounts for a very small number of cases in the United States – 5 to 10% of all cases.
- Guamanian: An extremely high incidence of ALS was observed in Guam and the Trust Territories of the Pacific in the 1950s.

#### Coding Corner

Coding for ALS in ICD-10 is **G12.21 Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis**, and when used as a secondary code will be a complication/comorbid condition. However, it shouldn't be confused with Primary lateral sclerosis (PLS) **G12.29**. Primary lateral sclerosis progresses more slowly than ALS, and in

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## Oxford's Office

### Top 5 Reasons Being Oxford HIM Is Great

- We have "The Right Talent. Right Now."
- Oxford Healthcare IT has a long history of working with facilities' EMR assessments and implementations.
- Who doesn't like black and gold?
- We're integrating our systems and processes for a seamless transition.
- United as Oxford we create a complete resource for you – the very best technical professionals to build and deliver your EMR system and the very best HIM professionals to support your reimbursement process.

ALS was first studied in 1869 by French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot. So, all you trivia lovers, does that name sound familiar? It should. He's the same neurologist who enlightened the medical community on the nature of Charcot arthropathy—aka Charcot foot. When Lou Gehrig died in 1941, his name became associated with the disease more than any other. (Gehrig was the beloved NY Yankee legend who was forced to retire from baseball due to his ALS).



# Set the Record Straight

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## Ask the Expert (Continued from page 2)

most cases isn't fatal.

There is a new procedure that is being used for patients with degenerative neuromuscular disorders to treat respiratory failure often associated with the paralysis of the diaphragm. This is the insertion of a neurostimulator with internal leads on the diaphragm attached to an external battery device. This procedure can be done laparoscopically and may even be done on an outpatient basis. See the PCS table to choose the details of the procedure below:

Section	0	Medical and Surgical
Body System	B	Respiratory System
Operation	H	Insertion - Putting in a nonbiological appliance that monitors, assists, performs, or prevents a physiological function but does not physically take the place of a body part

Body Part	Approach	Device	Qualifier
R Diaphragm, right	0 Open	M Diaphragmatic	Z No Qualifier
S Diaphragm, left	3 Percutaneous	Pacemaker Lead	
	4 Percutaneous		
	Endoscopic		

### References:

- "Sustained by My Faith—Living With ALS." *Awake!* January 8, 2006: page 27. Print.
- <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/primary-lateral-sclerosis/basics/definition/con-20034006>
- <http://www.alsa.org>

## Who Knows?

Name the disorder when a person obsesses about one's past, and displays an extraordinary ability to recall specific events from one's past in near perfect detail. Those affected describe their memories as uncontrollable associations, when they encounter a date, they "see" a vivid depiction of that day in their head which occurs without conscious effort.

Send your answers to:

[Sarah.Pedersen@onassignment.com](mailto:Sarah.Pedersen@onassignment.com)

All correct answers will be put into a raffle for a chance to win a \$25 gift card from On Assignment HIM!

