Interpretation for Use of Code Set from a Later Version
RFI 2010-01

REQUEST

Are there any restrictions in the current ASC X12 standard that prevents a user from using an ASC X12 approved code set from one version (e.g., 5030) in a transaction from a previous version (e.g., 4010)?

REFERENCED X12 STANDARDS

A "Request for Interpretation" applies to a specific version of the X12 Standards. The author asks a general question and referenced specific versions only in examples. We have chosen to base this response on Version 004 Release 010 of the X12 Standard. As the areas of the X12 Standards applicable to this interpretation have been relatively stable over time, it is likely that the same interpretation would be provided for other versions and releases of the X12 Standards.

The following X12 Standards were reviewed in developing this interpretation:

X12.6 Application Control Structure	Version 004	Release 010
X12.22 Data Segment Directory	Version 004	Release 010
X12.3 Data Element Dictionary	Version 004	Release 010

FORMAL INTERPRETATION

The data elements in a functional group may only use the code values, or values from referenced code list, from the X12 version and release specified in the Functional Group Header. Therefore, yes, there are restrictions that prevent a user from using a version/release 005030 code set in a 004010 transaction set.

Analysis

X12.6 specifies the properties of functional groups, transaction sets, data elements, and other aspects of the X12 application control structure. In specifying the properties of the Data Element Dictionary in section 3.5.2, "code sets" are described as:

"For ID data elements, the dictionary lists all code values and their descriptions or a reference where the valid code list can be obtained."

The purpose and scope of X12.6 state (emphasis added):

"This standard does not define any specific transaction set. Data segments are defined in ***a*** segment directory; data elements are defined in ***a*** data element dictionary; composite data structures are defined in ***a*** composite data structure directory; control segments and the binary segment are defined in this standard and fully described in ***a*** segment directory."

X12.6 recognizes only a single data element dictionary.

Data Element 480, Version / Release / Industry Identifier Code, used as GS08 in the GS Segment, Functional Group Header, states in its description:

"Code indicating the version, release, subrelease, and industry identifier of the EDI standard being used, including the GS and GE segments;"

Therefore in regard to X12 EDI standards (identified by a value of “X” in GS07, Data Element 455, Responsible Agency Code), GS08 specifies the version and release of the entire functional group, including GS and GE segments, the transaction sets, the segments, and data elements.

FURTHER DISCUSSION

The X12 EDI standard is published as a complete, stand-alone body of work with each version and release. Some of the component standards lack logical dependencies on each other and may be used with other versions and releases (for example, a mailbag of one version containing interchanges of other versions, or an interchange of one version containing functional groups of other versions). In these cases there are always ways to specify the differing versions and releases. In the absence of such mechanisms there is an implicit assumption that where logical dependencies exist, such as data elements within a transaction set, the standards are of the same version and release. Any other interpretation or assumption would make it impossible to determine the compliance of a transaction set instance with one or more versions and releases of the standard, based strictly on what is specified in the standard.