Issue Management Plan

Version 1.0

**Revision History**

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# Executive Summary

## Definition

Issue management is the process of identifying, analyzing, resolving, reporting, and escalating issues related and reported by the SMA ICD-10 Implementation program[[1]](#footnote-1), Workgroup[[2]](#footnote-2) or project levels[[3]](#footnote-3). Issue Management is carried out at all levels within the program, ensuring communication and resolution at the appropriate levels. This plan defines what an issue is, and describes the process to capture, escalate, and report issues at all of the appropriate levels.

An issue is a point in question or a matter in dispute that is unsettled and under discussion.

* Issues are NOT simply a list of activities (sub-tasks in a project schedule) or “To Do’s”
* Issues may be a formally defined problem that is impeding the progress of a specific program/workgroup/project activity/task.

## Objectives

The objective of the ICD-10 Implementation Issues Management Plan is to ensure the following:

* That the project team identify, evaluate, and assign issues for resolution, and subsequently monitor and track them to resolution
* Issue resolutions that will impact the scope, schedule, resources, quality or requirements management of the program/workgroup/project go through the change management process
* Document and communicate issue resolutions or decisions to all affected parties
* Identify, manage, and resolve issues at the appropriate level

# Roles and Responsibilities

As outlined in Table 1, all team members play a role in issue management – all team members should identify issues and log issues in the appropriate Issue Management tool. In addition, the PMO Team will use the Issue Management tool as a resource to manage issues at a program level. In addition, the project manager, or designee, will actively manage, assign/delegate, and report issues.

Table 1: Issues Roles and Responsibilities

| **Role** | **Activity** |
| --- | --- |
| **All Team Members** | * Identify Issues * Enter issue in Issue Reporting/Tracking Tool |
| **Workgroup Lead**  **Project Manager** | * Identify Issues * Track issue in Issue Reporting/Tracking Tool; Understand Issues across workgroup/program leadership * Escalate issues to workgroup/program leadership * Close issues |
| **Issue Owner** | * Identify resolution options * Update issue record as appropriate * Interface with Team Lead, Project Manager, appropriate designee, and PMO Manager when ready to close issue (when the issue is resolved) |
| **PMO Team** | * Complete regular audits * Monitor issues at the program level or higher * Facilitate weekly issues meeting with Program Leadership and Project Team * Escalate issues to program leadership as appropriate * Track escalated project level issues as appropriate * Close Issues at a Program level, or higher |

# Process Overview

## High Level Process

Outlined in Table 2 and Figure 1, the issue management process begins when a team member, at any ICD-10 program level, identifies an issue. An issue is an impediment to the satisfactory completion of a workgroup/project activity, which the team cannot resolve alone. The process should be dynamic and continuously monitored based on the defined team status meeting and reporting cycles.

Table 2: Issue Management Process

| **Inputs** | **Process** | **Output** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * **Charters**   + **Program**   + **Project** * **Project Plan** * **Risk Assessment Checklist** * **Roles and Responsibilities** * **Schedule/WBS** * **Change Management Process** | Continuous Workgroup /Project Team/Status meetings to **Identify, Update (Report),** and **Close** issues:   * Review Inputs and determine which apply * During planning processes, note any identified issues * Define issue escalation and resolution procedures * Modify other planning processes to handle issue resolution * Resolve issues * Re-Open issues * Transfer issues | The Issue Management Plan contains:   * Issues Tracking System |

**Note:** Track logging issues at the Workgroup or Project Level.

## Issue Identification Procedure

Formal issue management addresses significant issues while standard project management practices are expected to handle minor issue resolution.

The workgroup/project member begins issue management when the workgroup or project team cannot resolve the issue. The PMO will monitor issues, escalated at a program level or higher, as outlined above under Roles and Responsibilities. The PMO Team will work closely with Project Managers and Team Leads to ensure accurate documentation and management of all decisions relating to Issue management and resolution. Table 3 outlines the standard process for managing and reporting issues.

Table 3: Issues – Standard Operating Procedure

| **Role** | **Action** |
| --- | --- |
| **Issue Initiator** | 1. Team member identifies an issue 2. Initiator documents Issue title and description (Issue Tracking System) 3. Initiator notifies project team lead (Workgroup/Project Level) of new issue |
| **Workgroup Lead**  **Project Manager** | 1. Reviews Issues. Escalate where appropriate the issues that require guidance and decisions beyond the authority of the project team 2. The appropriate level lead (program/workgroup/project) or appropriate designee is responsible for actively working with the team to log, track, and manage issues as part of the Status Reporting cycle. Once the issue is logged, the designated lead assigns a decision-maker (‘Assigned to’) and owner (“Delegated to’). 3. The Team reviews Issues report as part of their weekly Status Reporting cycle 4. If able to resolve issue at the appropriate level, log resolution in Issues Log, notify PMO Manager of resolution, and revise project milestones as necessary.   - OR -  If issue cannot be resolved at the appropriate level, the issue should be escalated. |
| **Workgroup Lead**  **Project Manager** | 1. If an issue is closed during the workgroup/ project meeting, the Team Lead should change the status to “Closed” and document the resolution in the Issues Log. Document all pertinent information regarding the decision. The Team Lead, or appropriate designee, will work with the appropriate leads to revise all appropriate program/project documentation as necessary. The Team Lead is also responsible for communicating issue resolution to all relevant parties.   -OR-  If the issue is not closed at the workgroup/ project meeting, the Team Lead will ensure the issue remains open. The Team Lead will include the issue on the issue report the following week, including any updates to the issue since the last team meeting.   1. If the Program Management Team decided to de-escalate an issue, the Team Lead is responsible for changing the Escalation for that issue in the Issues Log and ensures it is not included in the subsequent week’s escalated issues log. |
| **Project Team** | 1. Issue initiator or Workgroup Lead presents Issue for review and discussion 2. Examine cross-team impact and discuss potential resolutions 3. After solution identification and approval, close the issue. Track issue resolution in the issues log   -OR-  If an issue requires additional analysis and cannot be resolved immediately, the issue will remain open and discussed again at the next ICD-10 Program Leadership Management Meeting.  -OR-  The Program Management Team may decide to de-escalate the issue to an appropriate level. |
| **PMO Team** | 1. If an issue is closed during the ICD-10 Program Leadership Management Meeting, the PMO Lead should change the status to “Closed” and document the resolution in the Issues Log. Document all pertinent information regarding the decision. The PMO Lead will work with the workgroup leads to revise all appropriate program documentation as necessary. The PMO Lead is also responsible for communicating issue resolution to all relevant parties.   -OR-  If the issue is not closed at the ICD-10 Program Leadership Management Meeting, the PMO Lead will ensure the issue remains open. The PMO Lead will include the issue on the issue report the following week, including any updates to the issue since the last Program Management meeting.  -OR-  If the Program Management Team decided to de-escalate an issue, the PMO is responsible for changing the Escalation for that issue in the Issues Log and ensure it is not included in the next escalated issues log. |
| **Workgroup Lead or**  **Project Manager** | 1. If an issue is de-escalated or if a resolution was assigned, the appropriate team lead is then responsible for continuing to track issue resolution. |

### Expedited Issue Request Process

Occasionally, an Issue may require escalation rapidly, rather than waiting for review at the weekly Team Status Meeting. In this situation, refer to the following steps outlined in Table 4 to escalate the Issue quickly. Execute the Expedited Issue Request process only when absolutely necessary. This will allow for the Program Director to review urgent issues on a daily basis for immediate resolution.

#### Entry Criteria

Identify an urgent issue.

#### Procedure Steps

Table 4 below outlines the procedure steps for expediting an issue request procedure.

Table 4: Issues – Expedited Issue Request Procedure

| **Day and Time** | **Owner** | **Action** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Daily, 4pm** | Workgroup Lead or  Project Manager | * Enter the Issue in Issue Tracking Log for the appropriate project * Be sure to select “Expedite” as the Priority |
| **Daily, 5pm** | PMO Team | * Run an Issues Report for all “Expedite” priorities |
| **Next Day, Morning** | Program Director | * Hold daily meeting to discuss escalated issues and requests * Communicate resolutions/actions back to the entire Management team via email |
| **Next Day, 12pm** | PMO Team | * Document resolutions in either the Issues Log or the Change Request Log |

#### Exit Criteria

The owner documented the resolution of an escalated issue (change request).

## Issue Tracking System

Track issues through an Issues Logging System. The Issues Tracking System should list each issue, designate a priority, status, indicate the team member to whom the issue is assigned / delegated, and the date by which the team lead expects task resolution. Each issue in the tracking system includes the following information:

* **Title** – descriptive and affiliated with the applicable tasks/event
* **Reported by** – pull down list of team members: person who generated the issue, which does not have to be the person responsible for resolution
* **Date identified** – date of entry
* **Assigned to** – Team Lead will make appropriate assignment to person responsible for tracking the progress of issue resolution, which may or may not be the person who resolves the issue
* **Date assigned** – date assigned
* **Delegated to** – Team Lead or Assignee will delegate the person responsible for resolving the issue
* **State** – 1) Active (Open), 2) Postponed (on Hold), or 3) Closed (complete). Only the appropriate Team Lead may change the State.
* **Priority Level –** Refer below to Table 5 for the priority description and level.

Table 5: Priority Level

| **Priority** | **Nominal Description** | **Description** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **3** | **Low Impact** | Minimal Requirement |
| **2** | **Medium Impact** | Extends Minimal Requirement – requires Change Control |
| **1** | **High Impact** | Out of Scope/Specification |
| **0** | **Urgent Resolution Required** | Executive Sponsor required for intervention and issue resolution |

* **Escalation level** – The level at which this issue will be addressed: 0) Sr. Management, 1) Program Director, 2) Workgroup Lead, 3) Project Manager
* **Due/Closed date** – date due (when State = 1 or 2). Date closed (when State = 3). ***Note***: Only the appropriate Team Lead may close an issue
* **Description** – Clear description of the problem/concern and area of impact
* **History** – History (precede by date) of debate and impacts for resolution
* **Resolution** – description of how the issue is to be (or was) resolved. If resolution results in a Change Request or Risk, then enter the Change Request/Risk number in the Resolution of the issue.
* **Category** – Area of impact/responsibility:
  + Business Environment
  + Project environment / management
  + Technical
  + End User
  + Staffing
  + Materials
  + Subcontractor / Vendor
  + Quality
  + Change Management
* **Classification** – potential impact to project
  + Time
  + Scope
  + Cost
  + Quality
* **Link Attachment** – hyperlink to a file (optional), if desired

## Identifying Issues

Track and log Issues at the Program, Workgroup, and Project team levels. Teams should actively identify and track issues on an ongoing basis. A newly identified issue has an “Open” status assigned. Table 6 below lists possible status assignments for Issues as they move through the issues management process.

Table 6: Descriptions of Issue State

| **Status** | **Nominal Description** | **Process Description** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | Active (Open) | Issue is open and active and needs to be discussed and managed by the appropriate designated resource(s). Issue escalation is critical when resolution discussion is required at the program/workgroup levels. This is the status of all issues awaiting a resolution. |
| **2** | Postponed (On Hold) | Issue no longer requires action, resolution or escalation, but is not resolved. |
| **3** | Closed (Complete) | Once an appropriate solution has been identified and approved, the issue can be closed. Issue resolution and pertinent decisions should be documented in the Issues Log. |

Categorize issues into four levels of importance, Expedite, High, Medium, and Low, based on their impact to the program goals and objectives, timeline and costs.

* **Expedite** – “I can’t move forward until this issue is resolved.”
* **High** – “I’m fine for right now, but unless this issue is resolved by the due date, I won’t be able to move forward.”
* **Medium** – “I’m fine for now, but this may impact my ability to move forward in the near future.”
* **Low** – “This issue is not impacting my ability to move forward.”

In the event that the ICD-10 program leadership discusses the issue and de-escalates the issue to the workgroup / project level, this change should also appear in the Issues Log. In the event that the SMA determines the issue is a risk, follow the Risk Management (outlined in the Risk Management Template) approach and procedure, and close the issue in the Issues Log.

## Assigning Issues

At the workgroup / project level, the Team Lead/Project Manager reviews issues during the weekly team meetings to perform the following:

* Ensure appropriate owner assignment
* Ensure clear documentation and communication of the due date and description
* Log issues in Issue Log prior to the appropriate Team Meeting

At the workgroup level, the workgroup holds weekly meetings to perform the following:

* Review newly escalated issues (confirming ownership and due dates)
* Communicate and approve resolved issues (reviewing the resolutions ensures that the PMO is aware of the potential program impacts and the preventative actions)
* Reject resolutions when they are inappropriate, infeasible, or insufficient for that particular issue
* De-escalate issues with marginal impacts
* Review issue metrics (to ensure issues are being resolved in a timely manner and escalated appropriately).

## Resolving Issues

The designated Issue Owner should analyze the issue and research resolutions. Mark an issue “Closed” and update the status in the Issue Log after approving a resolution. The Issues Log serves as the repository for all details and statuses associated with each issue.

To ensure effective and timely issue resolution, the PMO Team will perform the following:

* Regularly assess the status of the issue resolution progress
* Work with the resolving team to review and agree on the proposed resolution with all affected parties
* Manage issue communication, notification, and escalation.

## Communicating Resolutions

Each week, the PMO Team will create an Issues Log report to assist the ICD-10 Program Leadership Team in managing the escalated Program’s Issues. Everyone must understand the different issue statuses available, as well as the key issue reports (Refer to Table 7).

## Updating Issues

* The Issues Logging System updating process includes logging any ongoing activity against the issue.
* The Status Report MUST include Issues with a Priority Level 1 or 2 as part of the Status Reporting cycle.
* When resolving issues, change the “State” to “Closed” and retain a record of the issue in the Issue Log.

## Escalating Issues

There are several guiding principles on issue escalation:

* Utilize team expertise to resolve the issue
* Escalate when the team cannot identify or agree upon a corrective action or when the issue impacts multiple workgroups /projects
* Escalate to the Program Director or Sr. Management when issue resolution requires their attention
* Escalate based on impact to the Schedule, Budget, and Business benefits.

The order to issue escalation is as follows:

* Project Manager
* Workgroup Lead
* ICD-10 Program Director

## De-Escalating Issues

There are several guiding principles on issue de-escalation:

* De-Escalate when the appropriate party(ies) identifies and agree upon a corrective action or when the issue no longer impacts multiple workgroups /projects
* PMO Team will manage the de-escalation of issues when the escalation level is Sr. Management or Program Director

The order to issue de-escalation is as follows:

* Add a note in the History (be sure to precede by date) that de-escalation has occurred
* Change the Escalation field in the issue tracking system, as appropriate
  + Workgroup Lead
  + Project Manager

## Closing Issues

* Only the Owner of the Issue or ‘escalated to’ source may “Close” an issue
* A “Closed” issue is NOT reported in the Project Level Status Report or Executive Level Status Report
* If closing an Issue and re-assigning ownership to another project, change request or risk, reference the unique ID in the Resolution section of the issue.

## Re-Opening Issues

The process for managing changes to issues, includes:

* Re-open the Issue (change the “State”)
* Change the History (be sure to precede by date)
* Change the Resolution (be sure to precede by date)
* Communicate the re-opening and change of the issue to all of the ICD-10 program leads (program/workgroup/ project manager).

## Issue Tracking

Table 7 outlines the Issue Tracking process by program level.

Table 7: Level, Management, and Issue Log Report

| **Level** | **Management** | **Issue Log Report** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Program Director**  **(Area)** | * Responsible for managing the issues created by the Program * Responsible for managing issues escalated to the Program Director * Responsible for managing issues escalated to Sr. Management | * Filter all issues escalated to 0 – Sr. Management * Filter all issues escalated to 1- Program Director |
| **Workgroup (Division)** | * Responsible for managing the issues created by the workgroup, e.g., Customer Facing Operations (CFO) * Responsible for managing issues escalated to the workgroup, e.g., CFO * Responsible for managing issues owned by the workgroup and escalated to the following:   + 0 – Sr. Management   + 1 – Program Director   + 2 – Workgroup Lead | * Filter all issues within the Division, e.g., CFO * Filter all issues within the Division escalated to:   + 0 – Sr. Management   + 1 – Program Director   + 2 – Workgroup Lead |
| **Project** | * Responsible for managing the issues created by the Project, e.g., Benefits Training * Responsible for managing issues owned by the Project and escalated to the following:   + 0 – Sr. Management   + 1 – Program Director   + 2 – Workgroup Lead   + 3 – Project Manager | * Filter all issues within the Project, e.g., Benefits Training * Filter all issues within the Project escalated to:   + 0 – Sr. Management   + 1 – Program Director   + 2 – Workgroup Lead   + 3 – Project Manager |

**Escalation levels** – The level at which this issue will be addressed: 0) Sr. Management, 1) Program Director, 2) Workgroup Lead, 3) Project Manager.

1. The term “program” refers to the ICD-10 Implementation program overall. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Workgroups can be comprised of internal SMA resources and external contractor or vendor SMEs (as needed). Workgroups can be especially useful in:

   * Addressing recommended actions and raising issues and risks to leadership;
   * Facilitating communications across MITA business areas to limit duplication of work effort spanning multiple MITA business areas; and
   * Reaching beyond the SMA fostering communication with other SMAs or focus groups implementing ICD-10.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The term “project” refers to any ICD-10 relevant project team. Project teams can be aligned to business processes, policy groups or systems. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)