

Medical Coding

Professional Activities

A medical coding (or clinical coding) specialist is an individual who reviews and analyzes health records to identify relevant diagnoses and procedures for distinct patient encounters. The medical coding specialist is responsible for translating diagnostic and procedural phrases used by healthcare providers into coded form. The translation process requires interaction with the healthcare provider to ensure that the terms have been translated correctly. The coded information that is a product of the coding process is then used for reimbursement purposes, in the assessment of clinical care, to support medical research activity and to support the identification of healthcare concerns critical to the public at large.

The medical coding specialist must have a thorough understanding of the content of the medical record to be able to locate information to support or provide specificity for coding. The medical coding specialist works as part of a team to achieve the best quality patient care.

Job titles include clinical coding specialist, clinical data specialist, data quality manager and health information management (HIM) compliance specialist .

While hospitals are the primary work setting for coders, they are also found in physicians' offices, as consultants, in healthcare delivery systems, and in long term care and ambulatory care settings.

Educational Requirements

Certified medical coders are trained in the anatomy and physiology of the human body and disease processes in order to understand the etiology, pathology, symptoms, signs, diagnostic studies, treatment modalities, and prognosis of diseases and procedures to be coded.

Coders may choose to receive an associate or bachelor's degree in health information management offered at over 200 colleges and universities across the country. Some educational institutions also offer a coding certificate program. The American Health Information Management Association, in seeking to approve high-quality coding instruction, has developed a process by which organizations involved with coding education can be peer reviewed against a minimum set of criteria for comprehensive medical coding training. This process allows academic institutions, healthcare organizations, and private companies, among others to be acknowledged as offering an AHIMA approved coding education model.

Academic Programs

[Black Hawk College](#)

[College of DuPage](#)

[College of Lake County](#)

[Danville Area Community College](#)

[DeVry University](#)

[Highland Community College](#)

[Illinois Central College](#)

[Joliet Junior College](#)

[Kankakee Community College](#)

[Kishwaukee College](#)

[Lake Land College](#)

[Midstate College](#)

[Moraine Valley Community College](#)

[Oakton Community College](#)

[Olive-Harvey College](#)

[Rasmussen College](#)

[Shawnee Community College](#)

[South Suburban College](#)

[Southeastern Illinois College](#)

[Southwestern Illinois College](#)

[Spoon River College](#)

[Waubonsee Community College](#)

Employment/Salary Outlook

Employment of medical records and health information technicians is expected to increase by 20 percent, much faster than the average for all occupations through 2018. Employment growth will result from the increase in the number of medical tests, treatments, and procedures that will be performed. As the population

continues to age, the occurrence of health-related problems will increase. Cancer registrars should experience job growth as the incidence of cancer increases from an aging population.

In addition, with the increasing use of electronic health records, more technicians will be needed to complete the new responsibilities associated with electronic data management.

State and National Wages

Location	Pay Period	2009				
		10%	25%	Median	75%	90%
United States	Hourly	\$10.03	\$11.96	\$15.04	\$19.49	\$24.76
	Yearly	\$20,900	\$24,900	\$31,300	\$40,500	\$51,500
Illinois	Hourly	\$10.41	\$12.52	\$15.11	\$19.15	\$24.60
	Yearly	\$21,700	\$26,000	\$31,400	\$39,800	\$51,200

State and National Trends

United States	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings ¹
	2008	2018		
Medical records and health information technicians	172,500	207,600	+20%	7,030
Illinois	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings ¹
	2008	2018		
Medical records and health information technicians	7,360	8,590	+17%	270

¹ Job Openings refers to the average annual job openings due to growth and net replacement.

Professional Organizations

American Health Information Management Association
 233 N. Michigan Avenue, 21st Floor
 Chicago, IL 60601-5809
 (312) 233-1100
<http://www.ahima.org/>

American Academy of Professional Coders (AAPC)
 2480 South 3850 West, Suite B
 Salt Lake City, UT 84120
 801-236-2200
<http://www.aapc.com/>

Professional Association of Health care Coding Specialists (PAHCS)
 218 E. Bearss Ave. #354
 Tampa, FL 33613
 (888) 708-4707
<http://www.pahcs.org/>

References

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-11 Edition, Medical Records and Health Information Technicians, online at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos103.htm>

O*Net OnLine at <http://online.onetcenter.org/link/summary/29-2071.00>

