MARTIN UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CODING PROGRAM

Information For IU Health Employees

Revised April 19, 2011

Note: The information in this document was accurate as of the date published. Content is subject to change without notice. Information reflects the policies and procedures for employees of Methodist, IU, and Riley hospitals. Employees of other IU Health hospitals should refer to the policies and procedures of their hospital regarding tuition assistance, work commitments, and employment opportunities for Medical Coders.

Medical Coder/Clinical Coding Specialist Professional Description

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 utilized 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 utilized 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 in order to be able to locate information to support or provide specificity for coding. 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. Simply locating diagnostic and procedural phrases in the coding manuals or with encoder software without applying knowledge of disease processes and procedural techniques leads to coding errors. The medical coding specialist works as part of a team to achieve the best quality patient care.

There is a nationwide shortage of certified medical coders in hospitals, physician practices, and other healthcare facilities. According to the United States Bureau of Labor, employment of medical record and health information technicians is expected to grow much faster than the average field. Each year, AHIMA collects professional data from its credentialed members as part of the annual membership cycle. To find out additional information on trends in the health information management industry including medical coder salaries and to view sample job descriptions for Clinical Coding Specialists, Clinical Data Specialists, Data Quality Managers, and HIM Compliance Specialists, visit the AHIMA website at www.ahima.org.

(Source: The American Health Information Management Association website www.ahima.org)
Additional IU Health Information:

At IU Health, medical coders are called Clinical Coding Specialists (job code C113 for inpatient coders, C118 for outpatient coders.) As of April 2011, Medical Coding is on the list of Designated Health Careers for Tuition Reimbursement purposes; employees should refer to the most recent policy statements for details.

In addition to employment opportunities at IU Health, medical coders also work in other hospitals, clinics, doctor’s offices, outpatient centers, nursing homes, insurance agencies, law firms, medical billing and coding companies, home health companies, and from their homes.

Martin University

Martin University was founded in 1977 by Rev. Fr. Boniface Hardin, O.S.B. and is named after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, and St. Martin de Porres. The University is located at 2171 Avondale Place in Indianapolis, on the southwest corner of 22nd St. and Sherman Drive, on the city's east side. Reach the campus from Sherman Drive or by taking I-70 East exit to the Rural/Keystone exit and following the signs. The campus is about one mile east of Keystone Avenue and offers free parking for students.

Martin University is fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. The University’s mission is to educate low-income, minority, and adult learners, while welcoming all persons as students, staff, and faculty in a healing and freedom-minded environment. Seventy-five percent of Martin University students receive some form of financial aid. Martin University offers 17 undergraduate degrees (B.A. or B.S.) and two graduate degrees in Community Psychology (M.A.) and Urban Ministry Studies (M.A./M.S.). Through the PLA (Prior Learning Assessment), students may gain credit for their previous experiences.

(Source: The Martin University website at www.martin.edu)

The Martin University Medical Coding Program

Overview

The third cohort for Martin University’s Medical Coding Program starts classes August 22, 2011. The program is approximately 18 months in length plus a practicum experience and test preparation course.

The program is designed for working adults attending class on a part-time basis. Classes meet two or three evenings a week and on Saturday; the schedule varies from session to session. Some courses meet for 7.5 weeks and others for 15 weeks. All courses, with the exception of the practicum experience, meet at Martin University.

Students progress through the program in cohorts, completing courses in the required sequence and during the prescribed period of time.
Each course equals 1 credit hour, with 15 total credits awarded for satisfactory completion of the program. Graduates receive a Certificate of Completion from Martin University and may sit for professional certification examinations. Credits earned through this program may be applied towards requirements for degrees through Martin University.

Courses are taught by certified and experienced coders and other qualified faculty. Practicum experience is provided through affiliations with health care employers including IU Health.

Program Application and Admission Requirements

Capacity for each cohort group is limited to approximately 15 to 18 students. Individuals seeking admission must be accepted into the university and into the Medical Coding Program.

The Martin University Undergraduate Admissions Form is available online at www.martin.edu. or by contacting:
Karen Sloan
Allied Health Coordinator
Martin University
2171 Avondale Place
Indianapolis, IN 46218
317.917.3304
ksloan@martin.edu

Prior to enrolling in the Medical Coding Program, applicants must pass a Criminal History and Background Check; felony convictions are unacceptable.

Program applicants must:
1) Complete the COMPASS assessment with a minimum score of English 70, Pre-Algebra 55, or Algebra-only 1
2) Participate in a personal interview at the University

To meet the pre-requisite requirements for the Medical Coding Program, applicants must demonstrate proficiency in:
1) MED 100: Medical Terminology for Medical Coding (course transcript or test-out required)
2) MED 200: Introduction to Computers for Medical Coding (course transcript or test-out required).

Applicants who are accepted into the University but denied admission into the Medical Coding Program may enroll in courses at the University as preparation for reapplying to the Medical Coding Program at a later date. Individuals seeking admission into the Medical Coding Program may take their pre-requisite courses at the University. Students are encouraged to take all or some of the science courses required for the Medical Coding Program before applying (Anatomy and Physiology I & II and Pathophysiology.)
Curriculum and Tuition

Martin University’s tuition rate per credit hour is $440.00. Each Medical Coding course equals one credit hour. Tuition for the 15 credit hour program is $6600.

The following is a sample curriculum, subject to change:

Fall 2011 Session #1 (4 credits, $2200 tuition)
- MED 101: Anatomy and Physiology I, 15 weeks
- MED 112: Advanced Medical Terminology for Medical Coding, 7.5 weeks
- MED 113: Healthcare Delivery System, 7.5 weeks
- MED 103: Pathophysiology, 15 weeks

Spring 2012 Session #2 (2 credits, $880 tuition)
- MED 102: Anatomy and Physiology II, 15 weeks
- MED 108: Basic ICD-10 Coding I, 15 weeks

Summer 2012 Session #3 (2 credits, $880 tuition)
- MED 109: Advanced ICD-10 Coding II, 15 weeks
- MED 106: Basic CPT Coding I, 15 weeks

Fall 2012 Session #4 (5 credits, $2200 tuition)
- MED 104: Medical Law and Ethics/Professionalism for Healthcare Workers, 7.5 weeks
- MED 107: Advanced CPT Coding II, 15 weeks
- MED 110: Medical Office Procedures, 7.5 weeks
- MED 111: Insurance Methodologies, 7.5 weeks
- MED 115: Pharmacology, 7.5 weeks

Spring 2013 Session #5 (2 credits, $880 tuition)
- MED 114: Practicum, 15 weeks
- MED 210: Topics in Medical Coding Test Preparation Workshop, times arranged

Textbook expense (approximately $2000 for the program) is in addition to the cost of tuition.

The Medical Coding Program’s two pre-requisites (MED 100: Medical Terminology for Medical Coding and MED 200: Introduction to Computers for Medical Coding) are 1 credit hour each with a $440 tuition fee per course. Tuition for these two pre-requisite courses is in addition to the $6600 tuition for the Medical Coding Program courses listed above in the sample curriculum.
University Financial Aid

Eligible students may apply for Financial Aid through the University. Financial aid applicants must be enrolled in 6 credit hours per semester and be degree-seeking (i.e. working towards a BS degree at the University by taking extra courses while attending the Medical Coding Program). Contact the University’s Financial Aid office or Karen Sloan for details.

Eligible students may also apply for financial assistance through Work One Professional office. For information, contact Nancy Dauby at 317.228.0682 Ext 122.

IU Health Tuition Reimbursement

IU Health currently provides Tuition Reimbursement for Designated Health Careers; however employees should refer to current policy statements for the latest information and details (policy # HR-109.) Employees who plan to use Tuition Reimbursement to help cover expenses for the Medical Coding Program must meet all IU Health eligibility requirements.

The 2 pre-requisite courses (Medical Terminology for Medical Coding and Introduction to Computers for Medical Coding) and the 15 Medical Coding Program courses are currently reimbursable. However, the total cost of tuition just for the 15 Medical Coding Program courses ($6600 over 18 months) exceeds IU Health’s current maximum reimbursement amount per academic year for a full-time employee ($3000/year) or a part-time employee ($2500.) Therefore, IU Health employees should expect some out-of-pocket (non-reimbursable) tuition expense unless they receive financial aid from the University, from the College Park Work One, or from another source. Textbook expenses are not covered by IU Health’s tuition reimbursement.

Employees who wish to investigate additional sources of financial aid or textbook assistance may contact Lauriale Easley-Cabrera (317.962.0456 or leasleyc@iuhealth.org) for more information.

IU Health may elect to sponsor a designated number of employees in each cohort to attend the program. Sponsored students receive some additional benefits. Refer the section, “IU Health Sponsorship Information,” later in this document.

Considerations: Are you ready?

This rigorous 18-month curriculum requires a serious commitment to studying, participating in class, and achieving passing scores on tests. You’ll be taking 2 or 3 courses at one time. You must pass each course and each session before proceeding on to the next. If you must withdraw from the program or are dropped due to poor performance, you must re-apply at a later date with no guarantee of readmission. So it’s important to be prepared!
If you aren’t sure if Medical Coding is a good career match for you, consider enrolling in Promoveo®, IU Health’s health career exploration and planning course. Promoveo® is Latin for “to advance, to push ahead.” Classroom sessions and online learning will guide you through the process of assessing your interests and skills, exploring career options, selecting your next “occupational target” (i.e. job) and developing a step-by-step action plan to help you achieve your goals. An important part of the Promoveo® process is identifying obstacles before they occur so you can plan ahead to overcome them. Milestone meetings after the classes end will keep you on track and moving in the right direction. Contact Melody Dill (962-9003 or mdill@iuhealth.org) for more information.

If you aren’t sure you’re fully prepared to undertake this challenge right now, or if you want to take the COMPASS college placement examination as practice, make an appointment with Estela Martinez (962-2603 or emartine@iuhealth.org) at Methodist or Joan Stewart (944-1399 or jstewart@iuhealth.org) at the Riley Outpatient Center Garage.

If you don’t have a high school diploma or GED, IU Health offers free GED prep classes for employees and pays your GED exam fee when you’re ready to take the test. If you need a refresher or some remedial help, IU Health offers online and college prep classes free of charge for employees. To get started, contact JoAnn Rogers at 962-2527 or jrogers2@iuhealth.org.

**IU Health Sponsorship Information**

IU Health may elect to sponsor a designated number of its current employees to attend the Martin University Medical Coding Program in exchange for a work commitment at graduation. Human Resources (HR) and Health Information Management (HIM) leaders review workforce data on a periodic basis to determine how many employees could be sponsored to attend the program during any given period of time.

**Sponsorship Application and Selection**

IU Health employees who wish to be sponsored by IU Health must indicate their preference at the time they apply for admission to the program by completing the “Employer Sponsorship” portion of the Martin University Medical Coding Program Application form. In addition to the university’s selection process for all program applicants, applicants who wish to be sponsored by IU Health will be subject to an internal review and selection process conducted by IU Health. No additional application is necessary.

HIM managers may conduct a file review, speak with the applicant’s current manager, and interview sponsorship applicants to determine which applicants will be sponsored by IU Health to attend the program. Sponsorship applicants must have completed their initial six-month employment period at IU Health and may not be on an attendance warning or corrective action during the time of the application, review, and sponsorship selection process. Sponsorship applicants must be eligible for transfer according to IU Health’s Hiring and Job Change policy both at the time of applying for the Medical Coding Program and at graduation when applying for a position at IU Health as a Clinical Coding Specialist.
Sponsorship applicants will sign a waiver releasing their Martin University application materials, IU Health attendance records and recent Contribution Management evaluations, and other performance and academic-related documentation for review by HIM interviewers. Sponsorship applicants may be required to undergo assessments and career counseling and may receive “extra credit” for successfully completing Promoveo®. Applicants who are selected for sponsorship must sign a work commitment prior to beginning the Medical Coding Program. Refer to the section, “IU Health Work Commitment Contract,” later in this document.

Employees who do not wish to be sponsored by IU Health to attend the program, or who apply for sponsorship but are not selected by HIM management, may apply to the Martin University program without IU Health sponsorship. These employees will be subject to the same university application and selection process as all other Martin University program applicants. IU Health employees who attend the Martin University program without IU Health sponsorship will not be required to sign a work commitment. These individuals may undergo assessment, career counseling, and/or enrollment in Promoveo® on a voluntary basis.

**Tuition Reimbursement and Priority Placement**

All IU Health employees, regardless of sponsorship status, will be subject to IU Health’s Tuition Reimbursement policies, including the maximum annual cap on reimbursement, unless they plan to pay their tuition themselves without assistance or reimbursement from IU Health.

Employees who ARE sponsored to attend the program by IU Health will:

1) have their tuition paid directly to Martin University by IU Heath unless the tuition policy’s maximum annual amount is exceeded. The tuition reimbursement benefit for part-time employees is less than that for full-time employees. Sponsorship applicants should review the current Tuition Reimbursement policy for details. Martin University will defer tuition charges for IU Health-sponsored coding students until the end of each session. At the end of the session, Martin University will submit an invoice to IU Health for payment. IU Health will pay the bill using tuition reimbursement funds. If the student fails to complete a course with a final grade of “C” or better, the student must pay his/her own tuition to Martin University for that course.

2) complete their practicum experience in IU Health facilities when available.

3) be designated as a “priority placement” to fill a vacant Clinical Coding Specialist position at IU Health upon graduation. Employees who have been sponsored by IU Health to attend the program will be given priority by HIM when filling vacant positions for entry-level medical coders. Requirements for fulfilling work commitments will be detailed in the student’s work commitment agreement.

Employees who are NOT sponsored to attend the program by IU Health will:

1) pay their own tuition to Martin University at the beginning of the semester, submit required paperwork at the end of the semester for courses with final grades of “C” or better, and await tuition reimbursement according to IU Health’s Tuition Reimbursement policy.
2) submit an IU Health internal application upon graduation from the program and compete with other candidates for a vacant Clinical Coding Specialist position. Non-sponsored students will not sign a work commitment agreement.

Work Commitment Agreements

Applicants selected for sponsorship by IU Health must sign a Work Commitment Agreement prior to beginning medical coding courses. The agreement stipulates that the student must:

a) successfully graduate from the program by the pre-established date
b) submit an IU Health internal application for an entry-level Clinical Coding Specialist position within 30 days of program graduation
c) work the minimum period of time (18 months full time, or 3120 total clock hours) as indicated in the work commitment.

Sponsored graduates who wish to work in a part-time status in order to fulfill the requirements of their work commitment must be willing to accept a full-time position if no part-time position is available.

Sponsored students/graduates who fail to meet these requirements must repay IU Health the amount of tuition that IU Health paid Martin University on the student’s behalf. If the graduate works a portion of the time specified (months, years) but not the entire time, the graduate’s required pay-back to IU Health will be pro-rated accordingly.

If the graduate presents him/herself as a qualified Clinical Coding Specialist job candidate but IU Health does not extend an employment offer for a Clinical Coding Specialist position within 45 days of the date of graduation, the graduate will be released from his/her work commitment with no repayment required. If the recipient meets requirements to graduate from the program but fails to receive a job offer from IU Health due to sub-par performance during the program, repayment may be required. Determination of such sub-par performance and repayment shall be in the sole discretion of IU Health.

Under certain circumstances the recipient’s failure to graduate from the program, begin or fulfill the work commitment may be excused and no repayment of Educational Assistance shall be required. Such circumstances may include illness (depending on severity and length), change of personal residence (depending on reason and distance) and a corresponding termination of employment, and other cases of extreme hardship which would make it impractical to begin or fulfill the work commitment. Whether or not any given circumstances will excuse the recipient from repayment of the Educational Assistance shall be in the sole discretion of IU Health.

HIM administration will make final decisions in determining which, if any, program graduates are best qualified and prepared to fill departmental vacancies. IU Health cannot guarantee employment as a Clinical Coding Specialist or any other medical coding position regardless of whether the student was sponsored or non-sponsored.
INDIANA UNIVERSITY HEALTH WORK COMMITMENT CONTRACT
MARTIN UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CODING PROGRAM

Recipient of Educational Assistance

Please read this contract carefully and complete all blanks. This agreement is made between Indiana University Health and the undersigned.

Educational Assistance Recipient Name: ______________________________________

Employee Number: ____________________________________

Program enrolled in: Martin University Medical Coding Program

Program enrollment dates: Begins _____________________ Ends _____________________

The recipient of Educational Assistance understands that a work commitment is required by Indiana University Health. In consideration for providing the recipient with Educational Assistance, the recipient agrees to the following terms and conditions:

1. Upon successful completion of the program, the recipient agrees to submit an internal application for an entry-level Clinical Coding Specialist position within 30 days of program graduation.

2. The recipient agrees to work at Indiana University Health or one of its subsidiaries in a Clinical Coding Specialist position for which recipient is qualified for a total of 3120 hours (18 months of full-time employment or the equivalent for part-time employment.) In order to fulfill this work commitment, a successful completion of the program is required. The work commitment may be fulfilled at full-time or part-time employment status. Part-time employment status shall be a minimum of 20 hours per week. If the graduate prefers a part-time position but no part-time position is available, he/she must accept a full-time position in order to fulfill the work commitment.

3. This work commitment is exclusive of any other bonus, grant, scholarship or other assistance received by the recipient that includes work commitments. This agreement shall not constitute a contract of employment or alter the recipient’s status as an employee-at-will.

4. The recipient agrees that repayment of the amount of Educational Assistance shall be required if the recipient either does not graduate from the program by the established date, does not begin the work commitment, or the recipient begins the work commitment and does not fulfill his/her obligation. If the recipient begins the work commitment but does not fulfill the work commitment, the amount to be repaid shall be prorated. The recipient agrees to sign a promissory note for the amount of Educational Assistance received. The amount of the promissory note to be repaid shall be reduced on a pro rata basis over the period of the work commitment.

5. Under certain circumstances the recipient’s failure to graduate from the program, begin or fulfill the work commitment may be excused and no repayment of Educational Assistance shall be required. Such circumstances may include illness (depending on severity and length), change of personal residence (depending on the reason and distance) and a corresponding termination of employment, and other cases of extreme hardship which would make it impractical to begin or fulfill the work commitment. Whether or not any given circumstances will excuse the recipient from repayment of the Educational Assistance shall be in the sole discretion of Indiana University Health.
6. If no employment offer for a Clinical Coding Specialist position is extended to the graduate within 45 days following the date of graduation, this work commitment and repayment thereof is waived. If the recipient meets requirements to graduate from the program but fails to receive a job offer from Indiana University Health due to sub-par performance during the program, repayment may be required. Determination of such sub-par performance and repayment shall be in the sole discretion of Indiana University Health.

Recipient:

Printed Name
_____________________________________
Address
_____________________________________

Signature
_____________________________________
Date Signed
_____________________________________

Indiana University Health: Date:

_____________________________________
_____________________________________