

In an effort to control costs, complete and accurate records are becoming a necessity in order for hospitals and clinics to receive money from Medicare and Medicaid. As technology changes the world of medical records keeping, there will be an increased need for coders with the most current knowledge of new technologies. As in most occupations, many openings will result from the need to replace employees who transfer to other companies, retire, or stop working for various other reasons.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Academy of
Professional Coders
309 West 700 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84101
Phone: (800) 626-2633
Web: www.aape.com

American Health Information
Management Association
919 North Michigan Avenue,
Suite 1400
Chicago, IL 60611-1683
Phone: (312) 233-1100
Web: www.ahima.org

Mississippi Health Information
Association
921 North Congress Street
Jackson, MS 39202-2554
Phone: (601) 956-4105

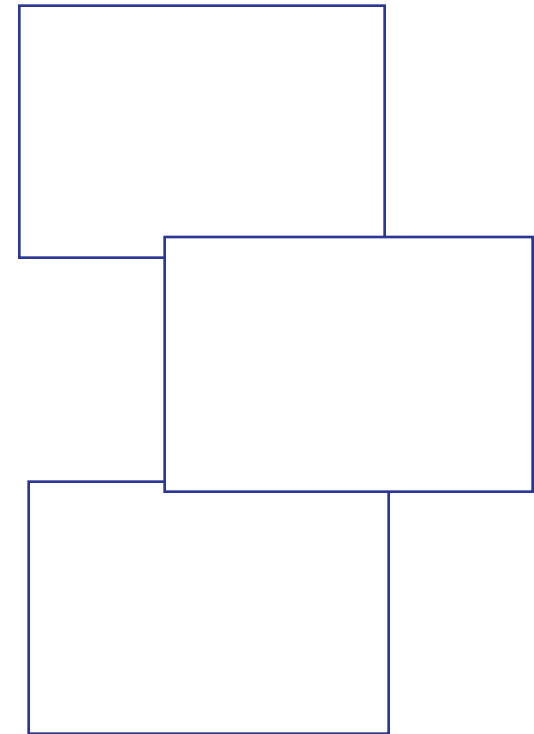


MHA HEALTH CAREERS CENTER

6425 LAKEOVER ROAD (39213)
P.O. Box 16444
JACKSON, MS 39236-6444
PHONE (601) 982-3251
FAX (601) 368-3200

WWW.MSHEALTHCAREERS.COM

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MEDICAL CODING SPECIALIST

POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

Medical coding specialists read and review medical documentation provided by physicians and other health care providers in order to obtain detailed information regarding their disease, injuries, surgical operations, and other procedures. This detailed information is translated into numeric codes. The coding specialist assigns and sequences diagnostic and procedural codes using a universally recognized coding system. Using this official classification system, coders must insure correct code selection for compliance with federal regulation and insurance requirements. These medical codes are used extensively for reimbursement of hospital and physician claims for Medicare, Medicaid, and insurance payments. The information compiled by the medical coders is used to prepare statistical reports for use by clinic and hospital administrators for planning, marketing, and other management purposes. Local, state, and federal governments also use this information to identify health care concerns critical to the public at large. Knowledge of both the medical and business sides of health care are essential in this detail-oriented field of health information management.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Medical coding specialist work in hospitals, clinics, surgery centers, long-term care facilities, insurance companies, dental offices, home health care agencies, consulting firms, coding and billing services, and government agencies. They typically work under the supervision of the Health Information Manager or Chief Financial Officer.

HIGH SCHOOL PREPARATION

Students interested in pursuing a career in medical coding should take high school courses in algebra, biology, computer skills, English, typing, office procedures, data processing, and health occupations/medical professions education.

COLLEGE REQUIREMENTS

Individuals interested in medical coding should have a high school diploma or equivalent. An Associate's Degree is recommended and is often two years in length. Training may be available on-the-job as well as through continuing education classes offered by state associations/organizations. Individuals desiring to become a certified medical coder must pass examinations offered by the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) and the American Academy of Professional Coders (AAPC).

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Medical coding classes are offered as part of Health Information Technology curriculum at these institutions.

Itawamba Community College
602 West Hill Street
Fulton, MS 38843
Phone: (662) 620-5122

Hinds Community College
1750 Chadwick Drive
Jackson, MS 39204
Phone: (601) 372-6507

Meridian Community College
910 Hwy 19 North
Meridian, MS 39307
Phone: (601) 484-8759

Healthcare Institute of Jackson
Certificate Programs
405 Briarwood Drive, Suite 110
Jackson, MS 39206
Phone: (601) 956-3940
hlthcarein@aol.com

SALARY RANGE

Average Annual Salary--\$28,500
Salary Range--\$20,000-\$36,000

CAREER OUTLOOK

There is an outstanding future for medical coding specialists because of the increased scrutiny over medical records by the government and insurance companies.