Medical Billing and Coding Meeting Minutes

Friday, February 19, 2016

Members Present: Vilma Bernal, Megan Harek, Madelline Hernandez, Sophia Hernandez, Shari Herzfeld, Ever Hilleprandt, Mark Hobbs, Par Mohammadian, Joanne Moreno, Christopher Rodriguez, Astrid Toledo, Margarita Torres, Valeria Soto

Participants:

- Par Mohammadian, Vice Chair, Dept. of Life Sciences, LAMC
- Sophia Hernandez, LAH3C program Technician, LAMC
- Vilma Bernal, Chair, Dept. of Business & Law, LAMC
- Michael Allen, VP of Academic Affairs, LAMC
- Madelline Hernandez, Dean of Academic Affairs, LAMC
- Isabelle Saber, Dean of Academic Affairs, LAMC
- Joanne Moreno, Faculty, LAMC
- Mark Hobbs, Program Specialist, LAMC
- Maria Herrera, Principal BioTech High School
- Astrid Toledo, College and Career Coordinator, Youth Source & Education, Department, Youth Policy Institute
- Megan Herek, Mountain View, Convalescent Hospital, Administrator in Training
- Erin Sricharoon, Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County (representing 58 clinics) (http://ccalac.org/) via phone
- Ever Hilleprandt, Coordinator, Education, Workforce Development; LA Chamber of Commerce
- Shari Herzfeld, Deputy Sector Navigator, Los Angeles Health Workforce Initiative, Regional Director
- Margarita Torres, Director of School Health Services Division, Northeast Valley Health Corporation
- Christopher Jay J. Rodriguez, BA, RHIT, CCS, AHIMA Approved ICD-10 CM & PCS Trainer, Enterprise HIM Coding Quality & Auditing Unit Manager for Los Angeles County Department of Health Services

Members Absent: Michael Allen, Maria Herrera, Isabelle Saber, Erin Sricharoon

Meeting called to order at 2:07pm
Introduction

- Par Mohammadian called Erin Sricharoon on the phone to join meeting, did not answer
- Went around the table to introduce all participants of the advisory board and see how they will be contributing to the Advisory Board
- Par Mohammadian gave an overview of what options are currently available (HOC, CNA) and what the goal is with our stackable certificates/degrees
- Par Mohammadian discussed agenda

Presentation of Medical Billing and Coding Courses/Certificate

- Students would take 3 Health Occupation courses as a foundation for the certificate
- Four courses were chosen for the Specialized areas
  - Microcomputer software survey in the office
  - Medical office procedures
  - Records management & filling
  - Introduction to medical coding/billing
- College catalog was added to the handout to give members a better idea of what each course covers to get feedback as to whether these classes are enough to prepare our students to be medical billers and coders
- Par Mohammadian noted that class description should be updated so that ICD-9 was updated to ICD-10
- Christopher Rodriguez noted that course 33 would need a little revamping due to federal incentives to turn filling digital; some file rooms are closing down. He was not sure how much could be put into the class since electronic filling is the new way to do things
- Mark Hobbs asked what software was used for it – Christopher Rodriguez noted that all documentation is done online and only things that can’t be templated will be done on paper
- Christopher Rodriguez mentioned that in physical process, physical writes a note on a medical record for someone to file, in electronic filling, the physician does the same process except they automatically file the information themselves
- Christopher Rodriguez stated that the goal of Electronic Health Record (HER) is to unify health record so that access to information is done faster if someone goes to a different facility
- Megan Harek mentioned that some facilities that are smaller scale do still do paper filling, but for students it would be very beneficial to train in the electronic filling as opposed to paper filling
- Shari Herzfeld pointed out that the current course description mentioned Access so that is something that needs to be built up and updated so that it is the focus. That class will still cover the paper filling they might use as some point
- Megan Harek discussed that for most facilities and hospitals, it is not enough for a coder to just know the ICD10 codes, they need to be able to know what they can be audited on, making sure that all notes are being charted and match so that facility can take credit for
patient care. Also making sure that doctors sign documents on timely manner, quality of documentations, etc.

- Christopher Rodriguez noted that if the goal is to have students complete this certificate and be able to get a job as a coder we need to beef up the courses. He recommended 1-2 semesters on ICD-10 coding and 1 semester on CPT coding. Can be taken in the same semester.

- Both Megan Harek and Christopher Rodriguez suggested that Billing and Coding should be seen as separate programs because having the same person doing the two jobs can result in some issues in auditing.

- Christopher mentioned that when entry level positions are opened for Coders, there is still a 6-18 month training program on the job.

- Megan Harek noted that one of the things that is really lacking is the hands on experience. Students are able to get a code from a diagnoses, but if a medical record is given to them, they have no idea what to look for, what to code, etc. For students who already have that, they are only going through a 6-month probation.

- ICD 10 has guidelines from many different organizations.

- Christopher Rodriguez confirmed that most organizations will hire students directly out of school. The only things that hinders the students is the lack of real world experience with medical records as opposed to line items activities or assignments in class.

- Megan Harek made another suggestion to go over what a Discharge Summary is, Progress Notes, Consult Notes, etc. in the class room.

- Christopher Rodriguez noted that coders must also be able to go back and ask physicians for clarification to make sure they are coding correctly.

- Par Mohammadian noted that most companies do not offer externships or internships although most companies who hire coders seem to have their own training within the first few months.

- Megan Harek mentioned that for the Billing students, it is important to teach them about insurance companies, and showing them what company is liable for what service – will need to be able to do the detective work to make sure the bill gets paid.

- Because Billing and Coding should not be the same person, it was suggested by Mark Hobbs to change the name but Christopher Rodriguez suggested leaving the name and keep the curriculum as it is and having it be a foundation. After students took these 7 classes they would take either the Billing or Coding specific courses.

- Par Mohammadian suggested that we can make a basic and advance certificate for Billing and Coding.

- Vima Bernal pointed out that the basic certificate could be used by the students as a marketing tool because a certification is not necessary, but it will help them get a job as an entry level employee and then move up in the company.

- Sophia Hernandez and Astrid Toledo suggested making sure that we are transparent with the students as to what their chances of employment are after the program and not trying to sell it to them the way proprietary schools sell programs and then students are not able to find jobs.
- Christopher Rodriguez informed us that there was a lot of turnover in the past few years because a large group who was close to retirement did not want to learn the Electronic Health Record system or the new ICD-10 system.
- Christopher Rodriguez noted that the pay range for a coder in outpatient facility is around 65-70k a year, in patient is 75k.
- Mark Hobbs mentioned that when doing the labor market research it was very difficult to find a category for Coder and the range was lower that what Christopher Rodriguez had mentioned – Christopher explained that it is due to the fact that many occupations get lumped together – he shared that through his work he was able to show to his company that the range for that occupation is lower if you just look at coders and not everyone in medical records.
- According to Christopher Rodriguez, hospitals like UCLA and USC pay their senior coders in the 6 figure range.
- Christopher Rodriguez noted that the states that pay the most are California, New York or Florida – students know this as well.
- Christopher Rodriguez noted that for billing, the introduction classes are a good foundation for them so that they can pick up the medical terminology, anatomy and physiology.
- Megan Harek mention that for Billing, we would need to beef up a class on understanding insurances and Medicare, Medical, etc.
- Megan Harek suggested to have a very light coding class for the Billers so that they can at least understand a code and see why they are billing at a certain rate.
- Christopher Rodriguez mentioned that it would be a good idea to include ICD10, CM (clinical modification) ICD10PCS, CPT, HCPS to make them more hirable.
- Shari Herzfeld mentioned that Billing is an entry level position that you can start at without any official certification and just a knowledge base, but Coding is more rigorous and has different levels of certifications.
- Shari Herzfeld stated that billing is about problem solving, need a set of skills, detailed oriented, processing.
- Christopher Rodriguez noted that because physical records are being phased out, the title might also change to Health Information Management – for a program like this you would need to add more on HIPPA and patient confidentiality.
- Par Mohamaddian suggested that the currently proposed curriculum can be the basic for Medical Billing, Medical Coding, and Health Information Management.
- Shari Herzfeld suggested to have the HOC courses are recommended classes to not turn students away that might already be in the field – make it more accessible to them and have them only take the required classes; need to figure out a way to navigate this and make it “optional” but “mandatory” at the same time.
- Madelline Hernandez discussed the option of challenging different pre-reqs. To make the program tailored to the student and their experience.
- Christopher Rodriguez shared that the age range for the Coders that are hired by the County has a wide range from 20yr olds to 50 and above; not all are certified, this
depends on the level they are being hired at – there is a program that will allow the new employee to get certified within the 2 year probation period.

- Mark Hobbs mentioned that here is strong labor market demand with a $16-$20 pay range; there will be a 26% increase in the next 10 years.
- Shari Herzfeld noted that this is a strong career option because most of the jobs are full time which usually comes with benefits and most hospitals report difficulty finding Coders.
- Christopher Rodriguez mentioned that aside from Coders that are hired through Hospitals and facilities there is also the option of getting hired as a contractor.
- Mark Hobbs suggested to somehow add the idea that these classes and certificate is foundational somewhere in the title.

Meeting adjourned at 3:19pm

Submitted by Sophia Hernandez 2/23/16