

Precyse University DNA™ Helps Build Coding Workforces from the Ground Up

The dust has been settling following the ICD-10 implementation deadline, but providers are still struggling to find and retain qualified medical coders. With coder employment rates and salaries at historical highs, finding good talent is difficult at best. The increased complexity of the new I-10 environment simply requires a greater number of more highly competent resources to support it, and coding errors can have significant impact on a provider's bottom line. How does a healthcare provider address this ongoing coder shortage?



Grow Your Own

With coding resources scarce, some organizations are striving to build their own coder workforce, utilizing employee candidates who have little or no experience in the healthcare field. In 2015, Precyse, a leader in health information management (HIM) services, technology and education, in cooperation with Vermont HITEC, a not-for-profit education center, successfully trained 15 Vermont residents to be coders. In Fall 2015, graduating class members

passed their coding certification exams and are currently employed as full-time Precyse coders. Another Precyse-Vermont HITEC class is being trained in the first half of 2016, with a total of 3 classes scheduled in 2016. For all classes, no prior healthcare experience is required.



15

Vermont Residents trained to be coders in the program's first session.

Education and Competency Management

A large part of the Precyse coder graduates' success is related to their use of Precyse University DNA, a tailored online education, performance management and benchmarking solution enabling healthcare providers to implement structured, personalized training programs for coders, billers, clinical documentation improvement specialists, physicians and others. The solution is not just about education, but also about evaluating competency so that education can be targeted to knowledge weaknesses as training progresses. Through first-of-its-kind staff knowledge and performance assessments and the HealthStream/Precyse University DNA Control Center™, students' proficiency and skills are analyzed and compared to national benchmarks for competency management and education plan guidance.

As part of Precyse University DNA is a program called Transitions, where recommended courseware and assessments are presented to transition workforce from one competency to a higher level. Examples of ones Precyse University DNA clients have utilized to meet staffing needs are non-coders to Hospital Outpatient coders, Outpatient/Same Day Surgery coders to Inpatient, and unit nurses to Clinical Documentation Improvement Specialists.

A Growing Trend

Following Precyse's revolutionary Vermont HITEC project, other leading healthcare providers are beginning to invest in the development of coder workforces from the ground up. Wake Forest Health System (WFHS) in Wake Forest, North Carolina, has initiated a project to build its own coder workforce from a local population of military veterans. "With coding talent shortages persisting, we believe that with a strong education plan and effective learning tools, we can build our own team and end up with greater employee loyalty," said Jackie Josing, Assistant Vice President, WFHS HIM and Clinical Coding Services. WFHS sees this as an opportunity to leverage a viable local workforce, address its coder shortage and give back to those who served our country.

With the right tools and a stringent vetting and development process, providers can truly grow their own coding workforce to meet resource shortages, contain staffing costs, and provide even greater support for their local communities.



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