

Precyse University DNA Transitions Program

Meeting health care job shortages by building a workforce from non-traditional sources

In an economic environment where many people struggle to find jobs, the health care industry seems to be an exception. In fact, there is a shortage of workers across multiple health care job roles. According to an article in *Modern Healthcare*, "Healthcare is one of the few industries in which there are more job openings than unemployed workers."¹ Moreover, the Bureau of Labor statistics reports that 9 of the top 30 occupations expected to see the most growth are in health care, and the World Health Organization relates that the world will be short 12.9 million health care workers by 2035. How ironic that there is an abundance of unemployed and underemployed people, and yet a shortage of health care workers. If those looking for jobs had health care skills, there would be no problem ... And that is exactly the thought behind the Precyse University² DNA™ Transitions Program (Transitions Program). Precyse University is the education arm of nThrive, an independent patient-to-paymentSM revenue cycle solutions company. "We saw health care organizations struggling to fill positions, and we saw communities where unemployment was a major problem," says Thomas Ormondroyd, President of Education and Analytics for nThrive Education. "So we decided to build a program that would benefit both health care organizations and job seekers alike."

Through the Transitions Program, nThrive is partnering with health care organizations across the nation to provide health care education and training to unemployed and underemployed people, many who have no prior health care experience at all. Once individuals complete the program, they become ideal candidates for high-demand, low-supply health care jobs, such

as medical coders, billers, patient access representatives, clinical documentation improvement specialists, and patient financial service representatives. It's a "grow-your-own" job-sourcing concept, where organizations actually partner with nThrive's Precyse University to train and groom people right in their own communities to fill much-needed positions. It's a win-win for both the organizations and the individuals in desperate need of employment.

The benefits of a 'grow-your-own workforce' solution

Health care organizations reap many benefits by educating and training unemployed people from their own communities to cultivate a workforce:

- **Meet the challenges of job shortages** – Fill job roles without resorting to paying the high costs of recruitment vendors.
- **Positive community relations** – Help people in the community that their organization serves, and in turn, garner positive public relations.
- **Accelerated education** – These programs are unique in that they provide previously inexperienced individuals with an accelerated means of acquiring their education, as well as much-needed on-the-job training. For example, medical coders traditionally go through a very long and generalized program of study, but finish school with no on-the-job experience. Since most hospitals require one to three years of experience for coding positions, many of these graduates are forced to

take unpaid internships to gain the experience they need so they qualify for full-time paid employment. In the Transitions Program, students receive the focused, intensive education, training and hands-on experience they need in as little as 10 weeks in order to be ready for full-time paid positions immediately upon completing the program and passing their CPC exam.

- **A loyal workforce** – Health care organizations that provide people with education, training, and growth opportunities are rewarded with loyal employees and a stable workforce.
- **Reduced costs** – As an optional supplement to the Transitions Program, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Apprenticeship Program offers students and their teaching institutions remuneration in the form of tuition reimbursement and housing cost. In some cases, the DOL provides physical classrooms. Health care organizations can become certified apprenticeship leaders to help drive their workforce development initiatives and reduce costs.

How Precyse University DNA Transitions works

With more than two million learners, nThrive's Precyse University is the most innovative, widely adopted on-site, online and mobile health care education solution available. Precyse University's education programs are delivered in conjunction with nThrive's partner, HealthStream®, a leading workforce development company for health care organizations. Through the Transitions Program, nThrive is partnering with health care organizations to develop targeted programs that educate, train and hire unemployed people in their communities to fill low-supply, high-demand health care jobs.

"The Transitions Program encourages health care organizations that have hard-to-fill positions to think differently about how they source candidates, and not just look at those with health care experience as potential job candidates," notes Ormondroyd.

"Precyse University has an established education platform that has been proven successful, and organizations can leverage that success to recruit and train people from non-traditional sources for needed positions."

Ormondroyd points out that one of the major benefits of Precyse University is that it offers courses in a variety of modalities that meet the specific learning needs of many different learners, including simulation technology, self-paced eLearning, and even video games.

Another benefit of the Transitions Program is that organizations do not necessarily need physical classrooms in which to educate students. Precyse University allows the choice of on-site classrooms or virtual online classrooms, or a combination of both. If an organization doesn't have the resources or space for physical classrooms, students can learn from home. For example, some organizations have chosen an all-virtual Skype class, where students "attend" class from the comfort of their own homes, yet still interact in real-time with their instructor and classmates. Other organizations split up class time each day between on-site class time and self-study at home.

"Health care organizations just need a strong commitment to provide jobs to the individuals who complete the program, and nThrive will provide the education and training," says Ormondroyd.

The Transitions Program leverages the Precyse University's DNA revenue cycle eLearning solution, a key factor in educating the candidates in rapid fashion through targeted programs which evaluate competency so education can be targeted to knowledge weaknesses as training progresses. Through first-of-its-kind staff knowledge and performance assessments and the Precyse University DNA Control Center™, student competency, knowledge and skills are analyzed and compared to national benchmarks for competency management and education plan guidance.



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THOMAS ORMONDROYD, PRESIDENT OF EDUCATION AND ANALYTICS FOR NTHRIVE EDUCATION

Examples of 'grow-your-own' concept

nThrive used the Transitions Program to staff its own workforce. In Vermont, the company partnered with the state government, a non-profit education organization, and the U.S. DOL Apprenticeship Program to train local Vermont residents as skilled medical coders in just 11 weeks. By fall 2015, graduating class members passed their coding certification exams, and 33 candidates are now employed as full-time nThrive medical coders. A second class was completed in the first half of 2016, and a third class is beginning in fall 2016 for Certified Tumor Registrars, demonstrating that this type of program can be applied to other job roles besides medical coders.

"We were extremely impressed with how hard students worked in the program and with the dedicated and accomplished professionals they have become as our employees," commented Stacie Moore, a Human Resources Director at nThrive and HR liaison for the Transitions Program in Vermont. "This has truly been a mutually beneficial endeavor. We are gratified to have given these individuals the skills, education, training and equipment they needed to begin a new career with a steady paycheck and a great future. In turn, they have given back to our organization and enhanced our company culture by filling greatly needed medical coding positions and becoming exemplary employees."

Adds Moore, "Another benefit we've reaped from the Transitions program is bringing jobs back to our country. These types of jobs are usually outsourced to India and the Philippines. Through this program, we've proven that professional fee coding can be done in the U.S. without incurring exorbitant costs. It has given us an opportunity to provide more U.S. coding services to our clients."

Following nThrive's revolutionary Vermont project, other leading health care providers are following suit. Wake Forest Health System (WFHS) in Wake Forest, N.C., 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."



2 million

More than two million learners at nThrive's Precyse University –

it is the most innovative, widely adopted on-site, online and mobile health care education solution available

Adds Todd M. Bankhead, VP Corporate Revenue Cycle at WFHS, "We believe we have an obligation to make a difference in the lives of individuals who have made protecting the American way of life their mission, therefore our staff share a profound appreciation for our many active duty, reserve, guard and retired military members, and we are passionate in leveraging the skills they learned in the military to drive our mission."

Looking forward

The grow-your-own approach is a rising trend in the health care industry as the availability of skilled workers remains tight. Many health care organizations view such programs as a means to give back to the local community and impact the lives of those with fewer opportunities. The program offers a life-changing opportunity for local citizens who are unemployed or have limited career opportunities or for military veterans who want to enter the private sector. It is an opportunity for those with no health care experience to start a new career.

As the health care industry continues to expand over the next decade, new workforce strategies will be required in order to keep pace with resource shortfalls. With the right tools and a stringent vetting and development process, health care providers can truly grow their own workforce to meet resource shortages, contain staffing costs and provide even greater support for their local communities. Through its Transitions Program, nThrive will be there to help move health care forward by addressing revenue cycle staffing challenges.

¹ "Tightening labor markets pressure healthcare to up wages", Bob Herman, March 26, 2015, Modern Healthcare

² nThrive was formerly Precyse, and Precyse University will transition its name to nThrive Education in the near future.



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