

# Medical Coding

## **Professional Activities**

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 used 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 used 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 to be able to locate information to support or provide specificity for coding. The medical coding specialist works as part of a team to achieve the best quality patient care.

Job titles include clinical coding specialist, clinical data specialist, data quality manager and health information management (HIM) compliance specialist.

While hospitals are the primary work setting for coders, they are also found in physicians' offices, as consultants, in healthcare delivery systems, and in long term care and ambulatory care settings.

## **Educational Requirements**

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.

Coders may choose to receive an associate or bachelor's degree in health information management offered at over 200 colleges and universities across the country. Some educational institutions also offer a coding certificate program. The American Health Information Management Association, in seeking to approve high quality coding instruction, has developed a process by which organizations involved with coding education can be peer reviewed against a minimum set of criteria for comprehensive medical coding training. This process allows academic institutions, healthcare organizations, and private companies, among others to be acknowledged as offering an AHIMA approved coding education model.

## **Academic Programs**

[Black Hawk College](#)

[College of DuPage](#)

[Illinois Central College](#)

[Malcom X College](#)

[Midstate College](#)

[Moraine Valley Community](#)

[Oakton Community College](#)

[Rasmussen College](#)

[Shawnee Community College South Suburban](#)

[Southwestern Illinois](#)

[Waubonsee Community College](#)

## Employment Outlook

Employment growth will result from the increase in the number of medical tests, treatments, and procedures that will be performed. As the population continues to age, the occurrence of health-related problems will increase. In addition, with the increasing use of electronic health records, more technicians will be needed to complete the new responsibilities associated with electronic data management.

## State and National Wages

Location	Pay Period	2020		
		Low	Median	High
United States	Hourly	\$14.15	\$22.43	\$35.67
	Annual	\$29,430	\$46,660	\$74,200
Illinois	Hourly	\$15.82	\$22.42	\$30.83
	Annual	\$32,910	\$46,640	\$64,120

## State and National Trends

United States	Employment		Percent Change	<a href="#">Job Openings</a> <sup>1</sup>
	2020	2030		
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	335,000	363,600	9%	27,400
Illinois	Employment		Percent Change	<a href="#">Job Openings</a> <sup>1</sup>
	2018	2028		
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	8,480	8,580	+1%	550

<sup>1</sup>Job Openings refers to the average annual job openings due to growth and net replacement.

## Professional Organizations

American Health Information Management Association ([ahima.org](http://ahima.org))

American Academy of Professional Coders ([aapc.com](http://aapc.com))

## References

*Occupational Outlook Handbook*, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/medical-records-and-health-information-technicians.htm>

O\*Net OnLine (<https://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/29-2072.00>)

Last Modified: October 17, 2022