Western Technical College
HEALTH AND PUBLIC
SAFETY DIVISION

Medical Coding Specialist Program
Western Technical College

Supplemental Information

- **Course Sequence and Delivery.** The Medical Coding Specialist is a two-year technical diploma program which may be completed in partial fulfillment of the Health Information Technology (HIT) associate degree. The program consists of 29 credits and is designed to prepare students for a career as a coder, translating diseases and treatments into coded data that may be used for reimbursement, public health statistics, disease tracking/trending and more. Entry level graduates typically find jobs in the outpatient or physician office setting and may move into inpatient coding after several years of experience.

- **General Anatomy and Physiology.** Students take General Anatomy and Physiology (General A&P) in the summer term before beginning core program courses in the fall. Successful completion of General A&P (a grade of "C" or better) is a prerequisite for Human Diseases for Health Professionals in the fall term that in turn is a prerequisite for coding courses throughout the program. Students who are unsuccessful in General A&P in the summer (Term 1) will be allowed to continue with core program courses in the Fall (Term 2) if they are also enrolled in General A&P. Students in this situation must successfully complete General A&P prior to progressing to the spring (Term 3). Along with traditional face-to-face meetings, General A&P is offered in multiple formats, including blended and online options. If this is your first introduction to this material or if it has been some time since you were exposed to it, there are a variety of supplemental supports that can help you be successful. Please ask your Admissions Coach or College Advisor about which one might work best for you. The General Studies Division offers this course every term, so you may choose to enroll in it prior to your first term. Please discuss which option is best for you with your Admissions Coach or College Advisor.

- **Professional Practice.** No internship experience is required for the Medical Coding Specialist although the instructor may schedule a lab activity in a clinical facility to expose students to coding in an actual job setting.

- **Certification.** Upon graduation, Medical Coding Specialists are eligible to take the Certified Coding Associate Exam of the American Health Information Association. Additional certification exams are available for those with on-the-job experience in coding. Passing the exam signifies that the student has met nationally recognized entry level competencies. For more information, see www.ahima.org.

- **Comparing Medical Coding Specialist (MCS) and Health Information Technology (HIT).**
  Both the HIT and MCS programs prepare students equally for careers related to coding and revenue management through a series of rigorous human science, coding and reimbursement related courses. The HIT degree has a broader scope than the MCS and for this reason it may lead to more and better paying job opportunities.

  Please refer to the HIT Supplemental Information sheet for examples of entry- and mid-career level job titles for Health Information Technicians, information about Professional Practice requirements and immunizations recommended for the HIT program. Some immunizations including COVID may be required by professional practice sites.

- **COVID Vaccination.** The Medical Coding Specialist (MCS) program does not require the COVID-19 vaccination, as it does not have a clinical component. However, most employers require the vaccination in order to be employed in an MCS capacity. For future employment prospects, students are strongly encouraged to get the COVID-19 vaccination. Contact instructors Susan Summerfield or Tamra Brown with any questions regarding employment requirements.

- **Program Faculty.** If you have specific questions about the program or your particular situation, please contact the MCS program faculty directly.

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