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Students wishing to start their medical coding can sign up for a certificate or associate program. Both options provide relatively fast career routes as a medical coder. Community colleges, technical colleges and vocational schools offer certificate programs where students learn to match symptoms, diagnoses, and treatment with the right standardized codes. Medical coding certificate programs usually take 9-12 months to complete. coding classes teach students to use current procedural terminology, the International Classification of Diseases, and the general system of coding health procedures. Other courses may cover topics such as anatomy, billing, medical office technology, medical terminology, physiology, and reimbursement methodology. Most online medical coding programs only require students to complete coursework specific to medical coding; this is different from associate programs that include general education classes and take longer to complete. However, credits earned in the certification program often switch to an associate program if the student decides to continue this option. As a rule, the higher the level of education, the higher the salary of medical coding specialists. Numerous schools and colleges offer certificate programs online. They provide more flexible, convenient and affordable alternatives to traditional programs on campus. Students should make sure that their future school has regional accreditation or that an agency like the American Academy of Professional Coders (AAPC) or the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) accredits the program. An associate degree in medical coding usually takes two years to earn. The curriculum includes roughly the same basic classes as the certificate program: anatomy and physiology; Billing and refunds and coding of medical offices, technology and terminology. However, it also has general education loans (such as accounting, business communications, and leadership development courses) that can prepare graduates for entry-level positions in management or management. Some programs may also offer specialties such as health information technology. As with the certification program, students must choose a regionally accredited technical or community college and/or a program accredited by AAPC or AHIMA to ensure credit portability and a smooth path to professional certification. Students who already have a certificate may be able to transfer loans to an associate Associate degree credits also go to bachelor's programs in many cases. An associate degree can lead to more employment, more responsibility and higher wages. Some employers prefer to hire associate degree holders rather than applicants only with certificates. In addition, AAPC recommends earning Associate degree prior to passing the Certified Professional Coder (CPC) exam. Certification is different from obtaining a medical coding certificate. Certification occurs after a person has completed a certificate or associate degree program. While not always a requirement, becoming certified can open the door to more career opportunities and higher wages. Two organizations that accredit medical coding programs, AAPC and AHIMA, also receive professional certification in medical coding and billing. AAPC offers general and specialized certification options, including inpatient coding, outpatient coding and risk adjustment coding. Advanced specializations for those with general certification and work experience include outpatient coding surgery, cardiology and family practice. The AAPC certification process consists of taking the CPC exam and working in this field for two years with 80 coder contact hours. The exam costs about \$400 and contains 150 questions with multiple options that must be completed within five hours and 40 minutes. Topics include coding procedures and guidelines, diagnostic codes and regulations. Medical programmers also need to fill 36 continuing education units within each two years to maintain their AAPC medical coding credentials. AHIMA offers certificates for certified coding partners, certified coding professionals and certified physician-based coding specialists. Applicants must pass an exam that corresponds to the certificate they hold. Depending on the level of the exam, test-takers in 2-4 hours will complete questions with multiple options and/or medical scenarios. Prices range from \$189-\$399. AHIMA requires people to earn 20 units of continuing education every two years to maintain their certification. Certification applicants should also check with their states for specific requirements, as they may vary. Medical coding specialists often work for several years to gain experience before deciding to obtain an extended certification or a more advanced degree. Some may choose to obtain a bachelor's or master's degree, which can lead to higher level leadership positions. The following pages contain information about programs that target those interested in medical career coding. Update: December 11, 2019 Independent, trusted guide to online education for over 22 years! Copyright ©2020 GetEducated.com; Approved Colleges, LLC All Rights Reserved University, or Letterhead Institution) Original with the address of the Internal Revenue Service ITIN Operations P.O. Box 149342 Austin, TX 78714-9342 This letter certifies: attached completed form W-7, Application to IRS Individual Taxpayer Identification Number confirming and documenting for _____ (insert the full name of the applicant) with the number SEVIS Name and SEVIS have Verified by signatures The applicant is not eligible to participate in SSN; and the original documents or copies of the applicant, certified by the issuing agency for identification and foreign status, were personally reviewed by the signatories. The Claimant provided the following originals or copies certified by the issuing agency documents to establish the applicant's identity and foreign status: (The list of documents here) Application Form W-7, Application for IRS Individual Taxpayer Identification Number Copy Form DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status (J-1 Status) Copy I-20 Certificate of Rights to nonimmigrant student status Copies of each document certifying the undersigned (choose applicable) for the aforementioned college/university/institution that is an approved member of the student and exchange visitor program (SEVP). 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