

COLLEGE OF DUPAGE



Physician Coding Certificate
Student Registration & Program Handbook
AY23-24

<https://www.cod.edu/physician-coding>

Welcome

Welcome to the College of DuPage Physician Coding program. The following registration packet has been developed to provide you an overview of the program and information on how to get started.

The **Physician Coding Certificate** is a specialized training program designed to teach students the CPT coding system used to submit claims for reimbursement for physician services and procedures. Students will explore basic anatomy, pharmacology, medical terminology, CPT coding conventions, guidelines, and legal concepts related to coding and reimbursement methodologies. Additionally, the Physician Coding certificate includes hands-on practice with coding exercises and scenarios to give learners the confidence and skills needed to enter the coding profession. The curriculum aligns with the AAPC's Certified Professional Coder certification, a nationally recognized industry credential.

On the following pages, you will find information regarding the program, the sequence of classes, credentialing exams and important program contact information. Please take some time to review the information and should you find you have additional questions, feel free to contact me at brusa235@cod.edu or 630-942-2242.

Again, welcome, and I look forward to seeing you in class very soon!

Best,

Andréa Brus

Andréa Brus, M.Ed., RHIA, CCS, CCS-P, CPC, CPC-I, CRC
Program Chair/Assistant Professor

Program Outcomes

At the completion of the program, students will be able to:

1. Apply coding conventions and guidelines for ICD-10-CM and CPT/HCPCS code sets.
2. Interpret healthcare documentation to assign correct ICD-10-CM and CPT/HCPCS codes.
3. Identify healthcare reimbursement methodologies.
4. Explain legal and regulatory requirements related to clinical documentation and code assignment.
5. Evaluate the relationship between accurate medical coding and reimbursement.

Licensure

The College of DuPage is a licensed education patterner of the AAPC (formerly the American Academy of Professional Coders). Students can be confident the education they receive aligns with the AAPC Certified Professional Coder exam, the gold standard for physician-based coding.

You can find more information about the AAPC and the credentials they award at [AAPC.com](https://www.aapc.com).

Certified Professional Coder (CPC) Credential

According to the AAPC, “The Certified Professional Coder (CPC) is the gold standard for medical coding in a physician office setting. The CPC certification exam tests the competencies required to perform the job of a professional coder who specializes in coding for services performed by physicians and non-physician providers (eg, nurse practitioners and physician assistants). Individuals who earn the CPC credential have proven expertise in physician/non-physician provider documentation review, abstract professional provider encounters, coding proficiency with CPT®, HCPCS Level II, ICD-10-CM, and compliance and regulatory requirements for physician services.” (AAPC, 2023)

Students who are successful on the CPC exam will be designated as a CPC-a or “apprentice”. To complete your apprentice, the AAPC offers the following options:

1. Practicode - AAPC’s web-based program that uses redacted medical records to provide CPC-As with real-world coding experience.
2. On the job experience - Work as a full-time coder for two years
3. On the job training + Complete 80-hours medical coding course (the COD certificate meets this requirement)

More information can be found at [CPC Apprenticeship](https://www.aapc.com/cpc-apprenticeship)

About the Exam:

- 100 multiple choice questions
- Assess 17 areas of content knowledge.
- Examinees have four hours to complete.
- 100% online proctoring.
- Option to purchase one retake.

What is the difference between Medical Billing and Physician Coding?

According to the AAPC, “medical coders identify billable information in the clinical documentation and translate that information into standardized codes. Medical billers use those codes to bill patients and create medical claims to submit to insurance companies.” (AAPC, 2023) Physician Coders most often work independently, and employment is subject on their efficiency and accuracy. Medical billers work collaboratively with patients, insurance companies, and other third parties throughout the claim cycle.

Program Course Sequence

Physician Coding Certificate		
1st Semester		
Course No.	Course Name	Credits
HLTHS 1110	<i>Biomedical Terminology</i>	3
HIT 1301	<i>Anatomy & Pharmacology for Medical Coders and Billers</i>	3
HIT 1302	<i>Introduction to Diagnostic Coding</i>	3
	<i>Semester Total</i>	9
2nd Semester		
HIT 1401	<i>CPT Coding for Physician Office</i>	4
HIT 1402	<i>Legal and Ethical Concepts for Medical Coders and Billers</i>	3
HIT 1403	<i>Revenue Cycle Management</i>	3
	<i>Semester Total</i>	10
	<i>Certificate Total Credits</i>	19

**Students are required to complete first semester courses before beginning second semester courses.

Course Descriptions

Please note: HLTHS 1110 or concurrent enrollment in HLTHS 1110 is required for first semester courses.

HIT 1301 *Anatomy and Pharmacology for Medical Coders and Billers*

3 Credit Hours, (asynchronous)

Students will examine the twelve body systems, the organs that they comprise, and the function of each. Basic pharmacology terms, treatments, and routes of administration will be explored. Clinically important diseases, associated etiology, and manifestations will be presented. This course is designed to prepare students to be able to understand and abstract clinical documentation required to assign appropriate diagnostic and procedural medical codes.

HIT 1302 *Introduction to Diagnostic Coding*

3 Credit Hours (in-person hybrid)

International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-10-CM) coding is a system used by healthcare providers to classify and report diseases and disorders. This course is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the ICD-10-CM coding system including its structure, conventions, and guidelines.

HIT 1401 *Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) Coding for Physician Office*

4 Credit Hours (in-person hybrid)

Students will learn how to interpret physician documentation in order to assign appropriate procedure codes. Students will learn how to apply the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) conventions and official guidelines for coding and reimbursement. Real-world examples and hands-on activities are used to prepare students to become professional physician coders.

HIT 1402 *Legal and Ethical Concepts for Medical Coders and Billers*

3 Credit Hours (asynchronous)

Students will explore various legal and ethical concepts related to the field of Health Information Management and specific to medical coding. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Stark Law, and the False Claims Act will be examined as well as fraud, abuse, and compliance related to the submission of reimbursement claims

HIT 1403 Revenue Cycle Management

3 Credit Hours (asynchronous)

Students will explore tasks associated with revenue cycle management contributing to the capture, management, and collection of physician service reimbursement. Students will compare different outpatient and physician reimbursement methodologies, patient cost sharing models, the specifics of health insurance claim submission, and payment processes.

Course Modalities

Courses are offered part-time (three classes each semester), in the evenings, and are delivered in a combination of asynchronous (no scheduled class meeting times) and in-person, hybrid modalities (depending on the course) making it ideal for working professionals or those who have other daytime commitments. **Attendance is required for all in-person courses.** Hybrid courses typically meet one-night per week on the main campus.

Program Progression

The field of healthcare is one of continuous change. Medical codes change annually as do the rules and regulations around them. Therefore, students should be prepared to complete the certificate in two semesters. Failure to do so could add program expenses (code books etc.) and students' ability to be successful on national credentialing exams.

Policies and Procedures

All Nursing and Health Science Division policies and procedures are found on our [Division website](#). It is the students' responsibility to ensure they have reviewed and understand the policies and procedures. The Nursing and Health Science Division reserves the right to change, at any time, without notice, these policies and procedures.

Estimate of Program Cost

Please visit the [Program Costs webpage](#) for estimated cost.

Registration Criteria and Checklist



Students interested in the Physician Coding program must complete all of the following steps in order to register for classes.

1. Attend a highly recommended Physician Coding [Advising Session](#).
2. If you have not been admitted to College of DuPage, please complete the **non-refundable** \$20 [College of DuPage General Admissions Application](#) online.
3. To ensure that all of your eligible credits are evaluated towards the admission requirements, turn in **ALL** official Transcripts from institutions that you have attended. Immediately:
 - a) Submit your official transcript(s) to College of DuPage, Office of Student Records. **If College of DuPage is the only institution you have attended, you do not need to request official transcripts.**
 - b) Verify receipt of your transcript(s). Login to your myACCESS account, click on 'myACCESS for Students', then select '**My Profile**'. The receipt status of your transcript will be listed under '**Transcript Institutions**'.

NOTE: If you have an international transcript from high school or college, it must first be evaluated. Please visit the following website <https://cod.edu/records/international-transcript-evaluation.aspx> for details.

4. Register for HLTHS 1110, HIT 1301 and HIT 1302

Program Guidelines

Attendance

You are expected to attend classes and to arrive at or before the designated starting time. Arriving late disturbs the class, especially during testing. If you have miss three or more classes during a semester, the instructor reserves the right to drop you from the course.

Note: It is your responsibility to obtain the class notes, homework, etc. for any day you are absent.

Attendance Policy Definitions

Absenteeism: A student does not attend a *scheduled* course session. Each missed class or clinical session counts as one absence. Students risk failing the course when they are absent. **Tardy or Late Arrival:** Arriving after the schedule start time to theory/lab and/or returning late from a break. **Leaving early:** Leaving class before the instructor has dismissed everyone (counts as a technical absence).

Professionalism

Physician Coding Certificate students have an obligation to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects honesty, integrity and respect for others. It is expected students will apply these principles to his or her academic and subsequent professional careers. The following information describes the professional behaviors for students in the HIT program. The expectation is that students will adhere to these Standards of Professional Behaviors in all settings.

- **Civility:** The ability to practice reflective, courteous, empathetic behaviors and communication when asking questions and interacting with classmates, instructors, the college and practicum staff and clients.
- **Commitment to Learning** - The ability to self- assess, self-correct, and self-direct; to
 - identify needs and sources of learning; and to continually seek new knowledge and understanding.
- **Communication Skills** - The ability to communicate effectively (i.e., speaking,
 - body language, reading, writing, listening) for varied audience and purposes.
- **Confidentiality:** The ability to respect the privacy of clients and to respect privileged
 - information at medical facilities.
- **Critical Thinking** - The ability to question logically, to identify, generate, and evaluate elements of logical argument; to recognize and differentiate fact, illusions, assumptions, and hidden assumptions; and to distinguish the relevant from the irrelevant.
- **Effective Use of Time and Resources** - The ability to obtain maximum benefit from a
 - minimum investment of time and recourses.
- **Interpersonal Skills** - The ability to interact effectively with patients, families, colleagues, other health care professionals, and the community and to deal effectively with cultural and ethnic diversity issues.
- **Problem Solving** - The ability to recognize and define problems, analyze data, develop and implement solutions and evaluate outcomes.
- **Professionalism** - The ability to exhibit appropriate professional conduct and to represent the professional effectively.
- **Professional Appearance:** The ability to adhere to established dress code in all clinical and professional settings.
- **Punctuality and Promptness:** The ability to presents oneself on time and ready to begin at prescribed times for course and practicum assignments.
- **Responsibility** - The ability to fulfill commitments and to be accountable for actions and outcomes.
- **Stress Management** - The ability to identify sources of stress and to develop effective coping behaviors.
- **Use of Constructive Feedback** - The ability to identify sources of feedback and seek out feedback for improving personal interaction.

Along with professional behavior, students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner when communicating in writing with College of DuPage instructors, administration, employees as well as other students. Professional written communication includes but is not limited to email, discussion posts, assignments, and exams. The following are additional guidelines for professional email communication.

Email

- Always use your student email
- Should include a clear subject line
- Professional greeting (good example, Dear [name] or Hello [name]; bad example: Hey, or no greeting at all)
- Use spell check and use correct grammar and mechanics
- Consider that you are not sending a text message therefore avoid abbreviations.
- Avoid using all CAPS as it implies you are yelling
- Proofread before sending
- Include which class you have a question about

Student Grievance Process

All student grievances, issues, differences of opinion are to be resolved directly with the instructor. Following the conversation between student and instructor, either the instructor or the student may feel the need to discuss the issue with the program coordinator. An appointment to discuss the grievance can be initiated by an email to the program coordinator. The appointment will be a joint meeting with the student, the instructor(s), the program chair and/or an academic dean.

Computer Skills

The field of Physician Coding is largely remote and requires its professionals to be computer proficient. It is expected, at minimum, that students beginning the Physician Coding certificate program have the necessary skills to be effective in an online supported learning environment. All face-to-face courses will have an online supplement, and many are offered totally online. Before beginning the program, students should at the very least be able to:

- Send and receive emails.
- Attach a file to an email.
- Download files from an email.
- Perform an Internet search.
- Create folders and folder data structures.
- Move/copy files from one folder to another.
- Zip/unzip files.

If you cannot do the above there are additional courses that will help you learn these skills. Please see a counselor for advice on gaining these skills.

Academic Integrity

Your participation in this class should reflect College of DuPage's core values of Integrity, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility. This means that it is your responsibility to ensure that you do not engage in academic dishonesty, including, but not limited to: plagiarism, cheating or helping another student to cheat, or violating an instructor's policies for completing an exam or assignment. There can be serious consequences for academic dishonesty that, depending on the severity of the offense, range from receiving a failing grade to expulsion from the College.

Learn more about the [Code of Academic Conduct](#) at College of DuPage.

The process of learning can and should be one of great collaboration and much can be learned from group discussions both in and outside the classroom. However, academic dishonesty such as plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated.

Academic dishonesty is defined as an intentional act of deception in one of the following areas:

- Cheating - use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information or study aids, receiving answers from someone who has previously taken the course is cheating!
- Fabrication - falsification or invention of any information
- Assisting - helping another commit an act of academic dishonesty- this includes uploading or downloading assignments/quizzes, exams etc. without answers to outside websites
- Uploading assignments, quizzes or exams to tutoring websites such as but not limited to Course Hero, or Chegg
- Tampering - altering or interfering with evaluation instruments and documents, or
- Plagiarism - representing the words or ideas of another person as one's own.
- Do not copy and paste material (or type the exact words) that you find from the internet (plagiarism).

If it is determined that you have engaged in academic dishonesty, you can expect any or all of the following consequences, depending upon the severity of the incident:

- a) give you a 0 for the assignment,
- b) give you an F for the course.
- c) removed from the Physician Coding program.

Any form of academic integrity will not be tolerated. The field of HIM requires its professionals be highly professional and lawful in the handling of sensitive protected health information as well as financial and personal information. Students who lack academic integrity demonstrate low morals and ethics and should not be allowed to enter the field.

Important Phone Numbers

Andréa Brus, M. Ed., RHIA, CCS, CCS-P, CPC, CPC-I, CRC

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Nursing & Health Sciences Division

425 Fawell Blvd. Glen Ellyn, IL 60137-6599

Division Office (630) 942-8331

Fax (630)942-4222

www.cod.edu

Health Career Program Advisors

Tara Hawkins or Lynn Weyrich

Counseling & Advising (630) 942-2259

https://cod.edu/student_life/resources/counseling/healthcareadvising@cod.edu

Financial Aid Student Services Center (SSC)

Room 2220

(630) 942-2251

Fax: (630) 942-2151

https://www.cod.edu/costs/financial_aid/index.aspx
financialaid@cod.edu

Registration Student Services Center (SSC)

Room 2221

(630) 942-2377

<http://www.cod.edu/registration>

Center for Student Success

Berg Instructional Center (BIC), Room 1A02, (630) 942-3400

Fax: (630) 942-3785

https://cod.edu/student_life/resources/center-for-student-success/index.aspx

References

AAPC. (2023, September 29). *Medical Billing and Coding Certification*. Retrieved from AAPC.com:
<https://www.aapc.com/resources/medical-billing-coding-certification>