

MEDICAL CODING SPECIALIST

Medical Coding Specialists are professionals skilled in classifying medical data from patient records in various health care settings such as physician offices, clinics, long term care and behavioral health facilities, and hospitals. These coding practitioners review patients' records and assign numeric codes for each diagnosis and procedure. To perform this task, Medical Coding Specialists must possess expertise in the ICD-9 and CPT coding systems. In addition, Medical Coding Specialists have a medical science background (medical terminology, disease processes, pharmacology, and anatomy and physiology). Computer and communication skills are extremely important.

Health care facilities or medical providers report coded data to third party payors such as insurance companies or the government (in the case of Medicare and Medicaid recipients) for reimbursement of their expenses. Researchers and public health officials also use coded medical data to monitor patterns and explore new interventions. Coding accuracy is thus highly important to health care organizations because of its impact on revenues and for predicting health outcomes or the results of new therapies/drug interventions.

Where do medical coding specialists work in Alaska?



Medical coding specialists can be found in hospitals, medical clinics, veterinary hospitals, long term care facilities, and behavioral health facilities. Native health corporations also provide job opportunities.



Hourly Wage Range*

\$12.51-\$23.18 (Mean \$17.41)

**based on Alaska DOL data for Healthcare Support Worker*



Years in School:

2 years or less*

**after high school graduation*

Educational Requirements



- High school diploma or GED is required.
- Medical coding certification is often required by employers. At a minimum, employers expect completion of specific college courses.
- Some employers require national coding certification.

Academic Programs in Alaska

HIM Coding Specialist Certificate:

University of Alaska Southeast (UAS)

Website: <http://www.uas.alaska.edu/sitka/programs/coding.html>

Healthcare Reimbursement Certificate:

University of Alaska Fairbanks, Tanana Valley Campus

Website: <http://www.tvc.uaf.edu/programs/health/health-reim.html>

College of Community and Rural Development (CRCD)

Website: <http://www.faculty.uaf.edu/ffsmr/>

Occupational Endorsement Certificate, Medical Office Coding:

University of Alaska Anchorage

Website: www.uaa.alaska.edu/ctc/programs/alliedhealth/ma/

Certificate in Medical Coding and Billing:

Charter College

Website: <http://www.chartercollege.edu/>

National Contacts

Inquiries Regarding Careers and Certification:

American Health Information Management Association

Phone: (312) 233-1100

Email: info@ahima.org

Web site: <http://www.ahima.org>

American Academy of Professional Coders

Toll free: (800) 626-CODE

E-mail: info@aapc.com

Web site: <http://www.aapc.com/>

Information from: www.healthcareersinalaska.info

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developed by Alaska Center for Rural Health-Alaska's AHEC: <http://nursing.uaa.alaska.edu/acrh/>