Becoming a Medical Billing and Coding Specialist in Florida

Sometimes also referred to as medical billers and coders, medical billing and coding specialists enjoy a career that provides both great flexibility and opportunity. Professionals working in this field are highly skilled in a variety of areas, including complex medical terminology and administrative skills. Medical billing and coding specialists must have well developed memories, as well as analytical and organizational skills. In this article, we will discuss everything you need to know about becoming a medical billing and coding specialist in the state of Florida.

What Does a Medical Billing and Coding Specialist Do?

Medical billing and coding specialists must be able to quickly and competently decipher medical terminology, and must search for documentation from medical providers in order to identify all recorded procedures and services, reasons for treatment, diagnoses, and conditions in order to make the correct billing code assignments. It is the billing code that sets out the amount of money physicians will be paid for their services. Two books, the ICD-9 and the CPT-4, are referred to as the medical records coder "bibles." These books set out all the different codes.

In order to be successful as a medical billing and coding specialist, you must have the required knowledge in medical terminology, physiology, anatomy, and pharmacology. You must also be highly skilled in billing, accounting, typing skills, and computer skills. Medical billing and coding specialists are responsible for the organization and verification of patient bills, records, and statements. They must record and process data with regard to patients, such as payments, bills, records of treatment, and information pertaining to insurance, and must set up patient payment plans. These professionals carry out coding of the diagnosis of patients, and request payments from both individuals and insurance providers (companies).

Medical billing and coding specialists work with medical providers, and in doing so also educate medical providers with respect to the requirements of medical records and chart reviews.

As a medical billing and coding specialist, you will be carrying out the functions both of billing and coding. While both of these functions are very often carried out by the same person, it is also possible for someone to work exclusively as a medical biller or as a medical coder. People who work exclusively as medical coders are responsible for reviewing clinical statements, and carrying out the assignment of standard codes. These standard codes are determined by way of the HCPCS Level, ICD-9-CM, and CPT classification systems. Those who work exclusively as medical billers are responsible for processing the claims, and for following up on them. These claims are sent to health insurance companies in order for reimbursement to be released for services that a healthcare professional has rendered.

Where Do Medical Billing and Coding Specialists Work?

Medical billing and coding specialists generally work in an office setting. Jobs in this field exist in many different workplaces, including hospitals, surgical centers, inpatient clinics, and dental offices. Medical billing and coding specialists can be found in any establishment that provides medical services. Medical billing and coding specialists also work for government services like Medicaid and Medicare, as well as outsourcing and insurance companies. Most medical billing and coding specialists work on a full-time basis.

Most commonly, people who have just begun working in this field begin their career taking care of both coding and general reception duties (for example, at a front desk). Once the person becomes more experienced, he or she is likely to be given a position with more responsibility.

This career provides a great deal of flexibility. Many of these professionals are able even to work from home, and it is common to have the ability to set one's schedule.

Once you have some experience working as a medical billing and coding specialist, you might consider the option of starting your own medical billing and coding business! While this is becoming an increasingly popular option for professionals in this field, you should keep in mind that starting and maintaining a successful business is a challenging endeavor. It can often take several months to start making a profit, and most people are unable to give up their employment for a substantial period.

Many professionals in this field who own their own businesses end up working in a specialty. This makes one's work experience more streamlined, as you will always be working with one area of medical procedure terms and jargon. It can also make networking and making appropriate contacts easier. When choosing a specialty, you will probably want to take into account the logistics other typical medical practice within it. For example, consider how many patients a physician in that specialty tends to see within a day. Many medical billing and coding specialists prefer patients who have fewer patients during the course of a day but charge more for each visit than medical professionals in other specialities.

Before beginning a medical billing and coding specialist, you will need to ensure that you can afford to cover all the start-up costs involved. If you work from home, you will obviously save a substantial amount of money by avoiding office lease expenses and so on. However, you will still need to cover the cost of all needed office equipment and other necessary materials. You will need a computer system (including a modem) and printer; a phone; stationary and other office supplies; HCFA 1500 forms; reference materials; a fax machine; the necessary software; and other essentials for the field.

How Can I Become a Medical Billing and Coding Specialist in Florida?

There are both diploma and degree programs in medical billing and coding. You should be aware that it is quite common for employers to demand job applicants have an associate's degree in the field. Associate's degrees can be earned at accredited community and technical colleges. After you graduate from your program, you will need to pass special exams in order to become properly certified. Those include the exams needed to obtain the Certified Coding Associate (CCA) certification, from the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), as well as the Certified Billing and Coding Specialist (CBCS) certification from the National Health Career Association (NHA).

When you carry out your educational program in medical billing and coding, you will need to do a hands-on practicum before graduation. Your program's coursework will probably include such subjects as CPT coding; ICD-9/10-CM) coding; the process of insurance claims; anatomy and physiology terminology; skills for the medical office; medical ethics and laws; Medicaid; Medicare; Blue Shield and Blue Cross; Medical documentation; and several others.

It is increasingly common for employers to prefer candidates who have a Certified Reimbursement Specialist (CMRS) certificate. Having this certificate makes you more eligible for higher paying positions. You can earn this certificate through taking the necessary exam through the American Medical Billing Association (AMBA).

Successful medical billing and coding specialists are able to work independently, and have outstanding critical thinking skills. They have excellent knowledge of the subject matter of their profession. Medical billing and coding specialists need to have strong communication skills, and must be people with high standards of ethics and behavior. Medical billing and coding specialists should also have a strong capacity for empathy. In order to succeed as a medical billing and coding specialist, you will need to be consistently detail-oriented, and able to quickly spot inconsistencies and errors. You will also need strong skills in the areas of organization and basic administration.

You probably noticed above that we mentioned that your education to become a medical biller and coder will include instruction in areas of the sciences, such as human anatomy and physiology, and perhaps you are wondering what those sciences entail. As a medical biller and coder, you will need to learn basic aspects of both of these sciences (whereas physicians and other medical providers must have detailed knowledge of them).

In the science of anatomy, we identify and describe the structures that make up living things. There are two main branches of human anatomy: gross anatomy and microscopic anatomy. In gross anatomy, we focus on the structures of life that we can see with the naked eye. This, of course, involves organs and organ systems of the human body. In microscopic anatomy (which

is also referred to as histology), human cells and tissues that are too tiny to be perceived by the naked eye are studied. These structures can be seen only under a microscope.

In the science of physiology, we study the function of organisms' internal workings, as well as the ways the internal functions interact with the world that surrounds them. There are many different categories and subcategories of physiology.

You will have also noticed that medical billing and coding specialists need to understand the proper standards and procedures of medical documentation. It is essential for anyone who works in a medical office setting, and especially medical billing and coding specialists, to understand both how important accurate and organized medical documentation is as well as the procedures they must use in order to ensure such accuracy and organization. The procedures of medical documentation ensure that there is accuracy and completeness in the record of patients, as this accuracy and completeness is essential in ensuring quality and continuity of patient care. Quality medical care is impossible without strong adherence to the standards of medical documentation.

When you begin your career as a medical billing and coding specialist, you are likely to start off having to be responsible for more basic office procedures (such as reception and simple administration), as well. Indeed, a medical billing and coding specialist throughout his or her career must have knowledge of all the skills needed for working in a medical office. One critically important administrative skill in the medical office is that of consistently recording information in a clear, detailed manner. You must be able to pay close and consistent attention to detail in order to thrive and succeed in a medical setting. You must also understand such office elements and phone and computer systems, and filing systems. These things may seem mundane, but having knowledge of these elements will be essential to your success.

Medical Billing and Coding Specialist Salaries

The median annual salary for medical billing and coding specialists in the United States is $31,402 ($14.72 per hour). However, it should be noted that these professionals have ample opportunity for salary increases through gaining greater levels of experience in the field.

The salary of medical billing and coding specialists in Florida varies from town to town and city to city. Like in most other professions, higher salaries tend to be easier to find in bigger cities. Below are examples of the median salary for medical billing and coding specialists in several Florida cities and towns. You should be aware that these numbers do not include possible benefits and bonuses.

Miami: $32,625.

Fort Myers: $30, 649

Orlando: $32,607

Sarasota: $31,141

Jacksonville: $31, 948

Medical Billing and Coding Specialist Job Growth

Medical billing and coding is a rapidly growing field, with a great number of wonderful opportunities. The field is growing at a rate much faster than the average of all other occupations.

Medical billing and coding specialists generally have many opportunities for advancement in the field. Once you have gained experience in the field, you will have the chance to get more education and become qualified to obtain a job as a billing administrator, supervisor, or office manager.

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