

Thank you for your interest in the online **Medical Coding Program** at Everett Community College (EvCC) in Everett, Washington. We are excited to provide you with more information about both our program and the medical coding industry. This handout will provide you with the following information:

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**About our program...**

Our Medical Coding Program is a completely online certificate program that focuses on providing the training required to obtain an entry-level position as a medical coder.

In partnership with Career Step, we provide an excellent web-based curriculum to deliver training for ICD-10, CPT, and HC/PCS coding of a variety of medical reports. In addition, current

program graduates will have access to ICD-9 training at no additional expense beyond shipping and handling fees for books.

### **Be sure to follow our MC Checklist with Timelines**

The [MC Checklist with Timelines](#) lists all the steps you need to follow from obtaining information to enrolling in the college, applying for financial aid, completing orientation, and even registering for classes.

### **What sets us apart?**

- Everett Community College is accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges and **44 college credits** will have been earned upon completion of the program.
- **Financial Aid is available** and may include Pell Grants, Direct Loans, State Need Grants, BFET (Basic Food, Employment and Training), and Military and Veteran-based funding including CAA for military spouses. You do not need to take the program full time to receive aid.
- In conjunction with Career Step, we offer the opportunity to participate in their **Graduate Services Program**, an enormous assist for getting your foot in the door to employment.
- Our program is reputable. Through our use of the complete Professional Medical Coding and Billing courseware content from our academic partner, Career Step, we are using an [AHIMA-approved coding certificate program](#). This provides reasonable assurance that graduates will possess the necessary job skills for entry into the profession.

### **Where is the program taught?**

Our program is completely online with no campus activities. Our students come from all over, including the United States and international locations.

### **How long is the program?**

The program can be completed in four to six quarters (12 to 18 months). If your computer and keyboarding skills need some brushing up, you may need to take additional classes before starting the program.

We have options ranging from part time to full time and can customize your course load throughout the program to meet your individual schedule needs. All our plans work with financial aid.

### **Is the program self-paced?**

No. There are scheduled start and end dates to each quarter and specific due dates for assignments. In addition, there are online participation requirements.

### **How much time does it take?**

You will need to dedicate approximately 3 hours per week per credit taken to complete all material. This will vary, of course, depending on your personal learning style and specific courses. The actual coding courses (MC 146, 151, and 149 and 181) are more intense and progressively more difficult than the “prep” classes.

### **Are there prerequisites?**

Yes. Students coming into the program are required to have a high school diploma or equivalent, and computer proficiency, including keyboarding skills.

You will need reliable high-speed access to the Internet and a computer.

As an online Medical Coding student, you are not required to take placement testing or come to our campus to register.

### **Is there a minimum grade point average to pass this program?**

Yes. You must receive a "C" (2.0) or better in ALL classes - equivalent to 85% or better. If you do not, you may repeat that class (up to two additional times) to raise your grade to passing. The cost of a retake is based on the number of credit hours.

### **What is the cost of the program?**

The cost for the program is \$6042.08 plus fees of \$323.64. Tuition is paid quarterly based on the number of credits taken and the courses you are registering for. (Costs, fees, and books are subject to change.)

If you need to repeat a class, this will be at your expense at the current cost per credit. (Please note that a C is required for passing; a C- does not count.)

If you take more than 12 months to complete the program, there is a \$150 extension fee per 4 months to maintain access to the Career Step courseware. This fee is separate from EvCC fees and is payable directly through Career Step.

### **Do I need to buy books?**

Yes! The estimated cost of books for the entire program is approximately \$800.00. Depending on how many quarters you take to complete the program and when you begin, you may need to purchase more than one edition of a codebook. The [MC Program Quarterly Book List](#) can always be found online. (Costs, fees, and books are subject to change.)

### **Will I be a certified medical coder when I graduate?**

No. You will receive a "certificate of completion" when you finish the EvCC program, but this is not the same thing as being "certified." The only way to become a Certified Coding Associate (CCA) or a Certified Coding Specialist (CCS) is to pass an exam given by the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) or AAPC (American Academy of Professional Coders). Generally, students finishing the program voluntarily take the CCA exam. After working as a medical coder for at least two years, the CCS exam can be taken.

### **Does EvCC offer job placement?**

While we do not offer job placement directly, all our program graduates who go on to pass the Career Step (CS) final exam with Honors or High Honors status (not required for EvCC program completion) are eligible for the CS Graduate Resources which provides support including extensive employer relationships, job notifications, and access to the CS Help Hotline for a year. In addition, the EvCC program does include a practicum that gives you good practice using your coding skills. Scoring well here is a good indicator that you are ready to take the CCA (Certified Coding Associate) exam. Potential employers are more inclined to interview a new medical coder with CCA certification than one without. While there is a high demand for medical coders, as with any job, it may take time to find the "first" job, and obtaining certification can be useful in this process.

## What is the projected job market for MCs in the future?

Right now and into the foreseeable future there is a shortage of qualified MCs in this country. The Department of Labor statistics predict employment and/or self-employment opportunities for MCs will continue to grow faster than the national average for the next several years. While there are opportunities for coders, graduates without experience should expect to start in an entry position requiring coding and patient chart knowledge.

## Where might I expect to find employment?

Medical coders typically work in medical clinics, physician offices, hospitals, and insurance offices. Job titles may vary and could include any of the following:

- Outpatient Coder
- Inpatient Coder
- Certified Patient Account Technician
- Medical Claims Review Specialist
- Claims Reviewer
- Claims Processor
- Medical Coder
- Certified Professional Coder
- Certified Procedural Coder
- Claims Assistant Professional
- Claims Analyst
- Coding Analyst

## What is the industry outlook like?

While there is always talk about the jobs changing as computers become more or differently utilized in our world, we do not believe that jobs are going to go away, rather that jobs will (as they so often have) change. The certified medical coder of today may well prove to be tomorrow's auditor or clinical documentation improvement specialist.

Some websites to visit for job and salary information include:

[AAPC website Medical Coding Salaries](#) is a page that includes annual salary survey information including the 2016 average salary of \$49,872.

[AAPC 2016 Salary Survey: Pay Climbs for Credentials](#) - keeping an eye out for Certified Professional Coders (certification we encourage all our students to pursue).

[Average Salary for Certification: American Academy of Professional Coders \(AAPC\)](#) - this is searchable in several different categories including salaries, by job, by years of experience, and by city or state.

[AHIMA 2012 Salary Survey Overall Samples](#) - be sure to check pages 6 and 7 for Coding Professionals.

[Average Salary for Certification: American Health Information Management Association \(AHIMA\)](#) - this is searchable in several different categories including salaries, by job, by years of experience, and by city or state.

[BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook for Medical Records and Health Information Technicians](#) includes coding in the job category and predicts a 15% (much faster than national average) job growth.

[O\\*NET OnLine Summary Report for Medical Records and Health Information Technicians](#) indicates a Bright Outlook (occupations are expected to grow rapidly in the next several years, will have large numbers of job openings, or are new and emerging occupations).

[AHIMA's Health Information Career Map](#) allows you to see different types of health information careers at different professional levels.

## **How does taking classes online work?**

Throughout our program you work online using your computer, the Internet, and a browser (Internet Explorer, Chrome, or Firefox).

Depending on the program track you select, you may take anywhere from one to four classes at a time, all taught completely online. Your course material will be provided through Career Step with additional material in the Canvas classrooms.

Your preparation for coding will include medical terminology, pharmacology, anatomy and physiology, pathophysiology and introduction to coding concepts such as legal compliance, healthcare reimbursement, and health information management. You will assign codes to actual medical reports across a wide variety of outpatient settings that a coding professional would come across as an outpatient coder.

## **What's it like taking classes online?**

Most people find taking classes online easy to master, although if you are new to online learning, it can be confusing at first. (This isn't to say the program is easy, but that taking classes online is not something to worry about.)

You want to remember our program is designed to be user-friendly. You have LOTS of support available to you throughout the program through your instructors, advisors, and technical support for both Canvas and Career Step.

## **Do I need to attend school at particular times or on certain days?**

No! While there are weekly deadlines explained to you in your specific course syllabi, you can log in and do your work as is convenient to you throughout the week. This can be at any time, day or night, any day of the week.

## **How do I interact with my teachers and advisors?**

Your teacher will work with you in online discussion boards and via e-mail. You will have full access to both the classroom (Canvas) and the courseware (Career Step) all the time. This is a true "24/7" opportunity. Should you need to speak with an instructor directly, you can always arrange for a phone call.

Program advising is done by e-mail, but can also be arranged in person. To do this, contact [MCadvising@everettcc.edu](mailto:MCadvising@everettcc.edu).

## **What will I do in Canvas?**

Once logged in, you will have access to all your classes individually in Canvas. In each of the classrooms, you will have your syllabus, discussion boards, and weekly lessons. You will be able to "talk" with your instructor and other students, read assigned material and take tests, doing the things you would do in any other classroom.

## **What will I do in Career Step?**

You will also be working in online learning modules in Career Step, where you will have assignments and work with both your courseware and actual textbooks, as well as working in the actual coding practicums. Course content will take you through everything from reading material to exercises and tests. Coding will be accessed through Career Step.

If you would like to explore the program material online as a guest, reach out to the MC Success Team at [success@everettcc.edu](mailto:success@everettcc.edu) to arrange this.

## What are Computer Requirements?

These requirements reflect the MC student needs when working in Canvas, our online classroom, and in Career Step, our online courseware. You need a computer; either a desktop or laptop will work. While some of the program content can be accessed on a tablet, you will need a computer to complete the program. This can be either a PC or a Mac, although a PC is recommended.

### Active Internet Connection is REQUIRED

- High speed/broadband connection is recommended.

### Operating System

- Microsoft Windows (XP®, Vista®, 7 with latest service pack 2 or 3, 8, or 10) –Windows 10 will require some minor adjustments.
- Mac OS X (10.4.11 or greater)<sup>1</sup>

### Hardware

- 800 X 600 minimum resolution (1024 X 768 or higher recommended)
- Sound card and speakers (Earphones recommended)
- Available USB port

### Required Software

- Adobe Flash Player (ver. 10 or higher)
- Windows Media Player (ver. 10 or higher) or QuickTime Player (ver. 7 or higher)
- PDF reader

### Recommended Software

- Antivirus software is recommended.

### Browser

- Internet Explorer 9.x, 10x, 11x
- Firefox 3.x or higher
- Safari 3.1 to 5.0

### Additional Computer Requirements

- Pop-up blocking to be disabled and cookies to be enabled.
- Java and JavaScript to be enabled and up to date.
- Adobe Acrobat Reader and Adobe Flash Player 11.
- Current Windows Media Player or QuickTime Player.

A printer (either inkjet or laser) is optional depending on your personal leaning and working styles. Some students print many things, others print none. Should you choose to print things, we encourage black-ink only options to reduce expenses.

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<sup>1</sup> The Medical Coding Program includes third party software tools that make the training only compatible with Microsoft Windows and Internet Explorer 8.x, 9.x, or 10.x

## What if I have other questions?

Ask them! We love questions. You can contact:

- MC Success at [success@everettcc.edu](mailto:success@everettcc.edu) or 1-425-388-9034, toll-free at 1-866-304-3822, option 1
- MC Advising at [MCAdvising@everettcc.edu](mailto:MCAdvising@everettcc.edu)
- Financial Aid Support for the Medical Coding and Medical Transcription and Editing Programs at [MC-MTEfinancialaid@everettcc.edu](mailto:MC-MTEfinancialaid@everettcc.edu) or 425-388-9157, toll-free 1-866-304-3822, option 2
- For more information about EvCC's Medical Coding Program, visit [www.everettcc.edu/mc](http://www.everettcc.edu/mc).

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