

Preparing a New Associate for Coding and Billing

There is a wealth of resources available to aid in this process.

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Opportunity Knocks is provided by the Institute of Podiatric Excellence and Development (IPEd). They encourage you to visit www.podiatricexcellence.org to find or post job listings, resumes, or fellowships for podiatry.

A review of podiatry school curricula includes classes such as biochemistry, anatomy, surgery, and biomechanics with little or no practice management education. Most residencies are heavily focused on the clinical aspects of training with little time devoted to practice management. Some residents spend time in clinics, some spend time in private practice situations, but most do not receive quality training in billing and coding. Many of these residents graduate into the world of private practice where knowledge and comfort with the business aspects of practice are essential for success. In contrast to many other medical specialties, the majority of podiatrists are in private practice situations.

So how can a new associate coming into a private practice learn the intricacies of billing and coding? It is in both the employer's and employee's best interest to have the new associate comfortable with the level of coding and billing knowledge necessary to effectively function in their practice on day one of employment. A potential employer

would be well served to survey a potential associate's knowledge of coding and billing during the interview process.

Likewise, potential associates may make themselves more desirable to employers by gaining knowledge in this area prior to starting the interview process. It is a good idea to have a new associate begin to learn about coding and billing or strengthen and advance any knowledge of it

National Correct Coding Initiative Edits.

The CRC has an excellent crosswalk to convert known ICD-9 codes into ICD-10 codes. Every CPT code has a link to its Correct Coding Initiative Edits, its Relative Value Units (RVUs), a listing of its global period, and a link to suggested ICD-9 codes that may be considered for use in billing that CPT code. For APMA members, the cost is \$249 per year

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as soon as a contract agreement is reached. There are many resources available for this.

APMA Coding Resource Center

The APMA Coding Resource Center (CRC) contains a wealth of information. For beginners, there is a library with content including "An Overview of Coding Principles", an Evaluation and Management Services Guide, and other valuable articles and overviews. The library also contains HIPAA documents and an NCCI Policy Manual for every CPT chapter. Resources available with a subscription also include every Local Coverage Determination (LCD) in the country and Medicare

and \$525 per year for non-APMA members. If you would like to try it out before purchasing, there is a 7-day free trial. This resource is constantly updated with any changes so you can be sure the information you are accessing is up-to-date. It is accessible on any device with Internet service, which offers the advantage of easy accessibility without having to carry any heavy books.

Codingline.com

Codingline.com is a website that has a forum where anyone can post coding, billing, and documentation questions. Answers are reviewed and posted by the moderator and these

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answers come from both subscribers and expert panelists. The forum can be accessed and read at any time by subscribers. Subscribers also have the option of having forum postings regularly delivered to their email at a frequency of their choice. Codingline also has a library with a wealth of information including archived presentations, and examples of operative notes, appeal letters, office forms, and much more.

There are different levels of membership to the website. APMA members receive a complimentary subscription at the APMA Silver level and there are other levels available as well. This website also offers a subscription to *CodinglinePRINT*, an online monthly foot and ankle coding and reimbursement newsletter which is downloadable, printable, and searchable.

Live Courses

There are many courses available where billing and coding topics are covered that would be quite useful to a new associate. The American Academy of Podiatric Practice Management offers seminars that extensively cover coding and billing issues. At the upcoming AAPPMP seminar in Denver (<http://www.aappm.org/september-seminar.html>) in September, 2015 there will be a track completely devoted to coding

and billing and another track completely devoted to new practitioners.

The APMA provides coding seminars at many meetings as a service to its members. Every year, the APMA Annual Scientific Meeting (The National) offers an APMA Coding Seminar. The APMA also sends represen-

tatives from its Coding Committee to local meetings, including many of the state component meetings. Other organizations offer live courses as well. For example, the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS) is offering a series of interactive surgical coding workshops in 2015. Others can be found via online searches as well.

Webinars

Webinars provide convenient, on-demand education that can be viewed and/or listened to in a variety of locations on different types of devices, allowing for flexibility in the way one may want to take in information. Different societies and companies offer billing and coding webinars, and these can be found via online searches. The APMA reg-

ularly offers free live webinars to its members with question and answer sessions at the end. They also archive their webinars so members can listen at a later time if they wish. There are three years worth of webinars, including extensive ICD-10 training, on the APMA website right now.

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Your EHR Vendor

Some EHR companies offer training in billing and coding to their clients as part of their agreement. Some do this on site or at seminars, while others offer webinars. As an example, TRAKNet Charting Solutions has provided many webinars for their clients that they make available to anyone at no charge on YouTube.com.

Books

There are a wide variety of books and manuals available that may be of use to a new associate seeking to learn about coding, billing, and documentation. These are often for sale at conferences and many are available online as well. These may be desirable to the practitioner who prefers to do learning offline.

Both the employer and the new associate will feel better about day one of employment if the associate has done some training in billing and coding before starting at the new practice. There are many resources available that a new associate can take advantage of to help smooth the transition into a new practice. It's never too early to start! **PM**

The author discloses that he is an expert panelist for Codingline.com.



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