NEW OCCUPATIONAL ENDORSEMENT REQUEST
(UA Regulation 10.04.02)

MEDICAL BILLING
OCCUPATIONAL ENDORSEMENT

Submitted by
Division of Allied Health
College of Rural and Community Development
Rural Health Programs and
Tanana Valley Campus
University of Alaska Fairbanks

April, 2008
I. **Cover Memorandum**

A. The following faculty participated in preparing these documents (Rural & TVC Allied Health):

Shawn Russell, CPC
Assistant Professor, CRCD Rural Health Programs
Rural Allied Health Coordinator

Marsha Sousa, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Allied Health TVC
TVC Allied Health Coordinator

Christa Bartlett, CMA, CPC
Assistant Professor, Allied Health TVC
Medical Assisting, Medical/Dental Reception, and Health Care Reimbursement Programs Head

B. **Brief statement of the proposed endorsement, industry objectives and abbreviated student learning outcomes assessment and implementation plan.**

1. **Statement of the proposed endorsement**

The proposed Occupational Endorsement in Medical Billing will consist of courses derived from the Healthcare Reimbursement Certificate Program. This program will prepare students for employment as medical billers. This Medical Billing Occupational Endorsement will be offered both on the urban TVC campus and at the rural campuses or other state-wide locations through CRCD Rural Health Programs.

2. **Industry objectives**

Medical billing positions in Alaska have a 46% vacancy rate with a mean vacancy length of 26 months, and the most commonly cited cause of vacancy is an insufficient pool of qualified applicants. The benefits of local training and hire far outweigh the time and expense of recruiting workers from outside the state. The estimated costs per hire for health professionals working in hospitals and clinics in the lower 48 states is $4,358, while these costs for rural Alaskan hospitals and clinics is approximately $19,543. Thus retaining incumbent employees and maintaining or enhancing their qualifications and training status while recruiting local, entry-level employees are the most cost-effective strategies for meeting the high demand for health care workers.
3. **Student learning outcomes assessment and implementation plan**

The student learning outcomes assessment and implementation plan was developed to meet two needs: the need for the student to identify and document the skills and knowledge they have gained so that they may highlight that at a job interview (item 1), and the need for the University to document the effectiveness of the program (items 1 and 2).

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New Occupational Endorsement
Medical Billing

C. Review signatures of preparation:

See Attached letters of support from Industry Representatives

Christa Bartlett
Christa Bartlett, CMA, CPC
Assistant Professor, Allied Health TVC
Healthcare Reimbursement and Medical Assisting Program Head

Shawn Russell
Assistant Professor, Allied Health
Rural Allied Health Programs Coordinator

Marsha Susa
Associate Professor, Allied Health
TVC Allied Health Programs Coordinator
CQCD Allied Health, Division Chair

Tori Foote
Director, Rural Health Programs

Richard A. Caffield
Director, Tanana Valley Campus

ATTACHES
Ron Illingworth
Professor
College of Rural and Community Development Academic Council

Berndtie Joseph
Executive Dean, College of Rural and Community Development

Date:
5/12/08
6/4/08
5/12/08
6-5-08
5/6/08
4/09/09
04/08
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CRCID Allied Health, Division Chair

Date:

Torie Foote
Director, Rural Health Programs

Date:

Richard A. Caulfield
Director, Tanana Valley Campus

Date:

Ron Illingworth
Professor
College of Rural and Community Development Academic Council

Date:

Bernice Joseph
Executive Dean, College of Rural and Community Development

Date:
Signatures for approval:

Ilana Kingsley, Curricular Affairs Committee chair

Jon Genetti, President, UAF Faculty Senate

Stephen Jones, Chancellor UAF

Mark Hamilton, President UA
II. Identification of the Endorsement

A. Description of the Occupational Endorsement

1. Occupational Endorsement in Medical Billing

2. Student accepted into this occupational endorsement must:
   i. Document high school diploma or GED
   ii. Compass test scores (or alternative testing) indicating a core sufficient for placement into ENGL 111X.

3. Course descriptions of required catalogue courses

HLTH 100 3 Credits
Medical Terminology
Study of medical terminology including analysis and origin of word roots, prefixes and suffixes. Understanding the word components, students will be able to build, spell and define medical words. Content will be presented by body systems focusing on terms for anatomy, diagnostic, laboratory and medical specialties. Includes use of medical dictionary, word pronunciation and abbreviations. Designed for health care professionals. (3+0) Offered As Demand Warrants

C IOS 150 1-3 Credits
Computer Business Applications
Basic introduction to using a computer and office applications. Includes the operating system, how to save/retrieve files; word processing, document creation and formatting; spreadsheets (basic formulas and functions); and the Internet (browsing, searching and e-mail). (Provides basic computer literacy and prepares for C IOS 110, 130, 134 and 146. No previous computer experience is required.) (1-3 + 0) Offered As Demand Warrants

HLTH 236 3 Credits
Outpatient Health Care Reimbursement
Outpatient reimbursement issues including documentation, insurance carriers, schedules and payment profiles. Collection strategies and legal issues, and the importance of educating the patient to the financial policies of the practice. (Prerequisites: HLTH 132 and concurrent 234; or permission of instructor.) (3 + 0) Offered Fall, Spring

HLTH 237 3 Credits
Inpatient Health Care Reimbursement
Rules and regulations governing the reimbursement of inpatient and hospital coding. Includes HIPPA regulations, Medicare, Medicaid, third party billing, and the legal and ethical guidelines of inpatient billing. (Prerequisites: HLTH 132, 135 and 234; or permission of instructor.) (3 + 0) Offered As Demand Warrants
4. Requirements for the endorsement.

A. Proposed catalog layout

Allied Health

Occupational Endorsement: Medical Billing

The Occupational Endorsement in Medical Billing provides education and training for medical office workers in medical terminology, medical office technology, and medical reimbursement.

This program is open to those who have a high school diploma or GED and who are eligible for placement into ENGL 111X (according to COMPASS or other placement test scores).

1. Complete the following courses:
   HLTH 100 – Medical Terminology (3)
   CIOS 150 – Computer Business Applications (3)
   Or documentation of computer skills AND approved elective
   HLTH 236 – Outpatient Health Care Reimbursement (3)
   HLTH 237 – Inpatient Health Care Reimbursement (3)

Minimum requirements for the endorsement (12)

b. Proposed course of study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Full time student</th>
<th>Part time student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st semester</td>
<td>HLTH 100 (3) CIOS 150 (3) HLTH 236 (3)</td>
<td>HLTH 100 (3) CIOS 150 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd semester</td>
<td></td>
<td>HLTH 236 (3) HLTH 237 (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
c. Three-year cycle of courses

CRCD Cross-regional Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Fall 2008</th>
<th>Spring 2009</th>
<th>Fall 2009</th>
<th>Spring 2010</th>
<th>Fall 2010</th>
<th>Spring 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HLTH 100</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>HLTH 236</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>HLTH 237</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIOS 150</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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TVC Schedule

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<th>Course</th>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLTH 236</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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Each course is offered at least annually at TVC (except HLTH 237, which can be taken online through Rural Allied Health Programs). All of the courses except CIOS 150 are offered at least annually by CRCD Health Programs in the cross-regional schedule. The CIOS division is developing CIOS 150 for distance delivery, and there are several options for developing computer literacy available at rural campuses. By including “or approved elective” in the degree requirement, an advisor can work closely with a student to select an appropriate course to allow the student to tailor his or her skills for the workplace.

B. Endorsement Goals

1. Brief identification of objectives and subsequent means for their evaluation

The objective of the Medical Billing Occupational Endorsement is to provide a medical billing credential that enhances employability by including online and on-campus medical billing coursework that targets the skills needed for entry level employment as a medical biller in the state of Alaska.

The success of the program will be evaluated according to number of students successfully completing the program and number of students gaining related employment.

2. Relationship of endorsement objectives to industry needs

Medical billing positions in Alaska have a 46% vacancy rate with a mean vacancy length of 26 months, and the most commonly cited cause of vacancy is an insufficient pool of
qualified applicants. The benefits of local training and hire far outweigh the time and expense of recruiting workers from outside the state. The estimated costs per hire for health professionals working in hospitals and clinics in the lower 48 states is $4,358, while these costs for rural Alaskan hospitals and clinics is approximately $19,543. Thus retaining incumbent employees and maintaining or enhancing their qualification and training status while recruiting local, rural-based entry-level employees are the most cost-effective strategies for meeting the high demand for health care workers.

Biller shortages have reached crisis proportions in some areas of rural Alaska, such that the lack of reimbursement is impacting the ability to deliver quality health care. The courses required for this occupational endorsement have been successfully delivered to rural Alaskan students by a blended delivery combination of on-site visits and distance education, and support from the workplace. Partnerships with tribal, public, and private health corporations have been successful (according to numbers of returning students and continued corporate support).

3. Occupational/other competencies to be achieved

Students will successfully complete coursework in medical terminology, medical office technology, and medical reimbursement.

4. Relationship of courses to the endorsement objectives

The courses to be completed within the occupational endorsement speak directly to the specific skills required for entry-level workers in medical offices, and provide a foundation for these students to enter more advanced training.

C. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan, and identification of the individual (by position) who will be responsible for directing its implementation.

a. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan

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b. Responsibility for implementation of rural students' student learning outcomes assessment plans will belong to the Rural Allied Health Program Coordinator. Responsibility for implementation of TVC students' student learning outcomes assessment plans will belong to the Rural Allied Health program coordinator. Records that will be maintained include identification of students, records of courses taken and grades awarded, and records of employment for two years following completion of occupational endorsement. Rural Allied Health faculty and TVC Allied Health faculty will work together to compile and maintain program data related to student learning outcomes.
III. Personnel Directly Involved with Program

A. Instructional Staff
   Shawn Russell
   Rural Allied Health Coordinator
   Assistant Professor of Allied Health
   Teach HLTH 236 Outpatient Health Care Reimbursement, HLTH 237 Inpatient Health Care Reimbursement, and HLTH 100 Medical Terminology. Advise rural students in the Medical Billing Occupational Endorsement Program.

   Christa Bartlett
   Assistant Professor, Allied Health TVC
   Healthcare Reimbursement and Medical Assisting Program Head
   Teach coursework and advise TVC students.

   Adjunct Faculty will be hired to teach courses in the curriculum. Qualifications vary according to course.

B. Administrative, coordinating and classified staff (Rural & TVC Allied Health)
   Shawn Russell
   Rural Allied Health Coordinator
   Assistant Professor of Allied Health
   Recruit rural students, develop partnerships with industry in rural Alaska, advise students, oversee quality of program, maintain records for Student Outcomes, identify adjunct faculty, schedule classes, coordinate with Tanana Valley Campus.

   Marsha Sousa, Associate Professor
   Coordinator Allied Health Programs, TVC
   Oversee quality of program, maintain records for Student Outcomes, identify adjunct faculty, schedule classes, coordinate with CRCD Health Programs.

   Christa Bartlett, Assistant Professor
   Coordinator Healthcare Reimbursement Program
   Oversee quality of program, identify adjunct faculty, advise students, coordinate with CRCD Health Programs.

   Torie Foote
   Director CRCD Rural Health Programs
   Identify trends and needs in rural Alaska, locate grant monies to support programs.

   Cheryl Allen, Administrative Assistant
   TVC Budget reconciliation, order supplies, schedule classes, assist with adjunct contracts.

   Richard A. Caulfield, Director, TVC
   Evaluate faculty and staff, make decisions with regard to resource allocation.
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Lilly Sommer
Student Success Coordinator, CRCD Rural Health Programs
Assist and Advise rural students.

Elizabeth Belknap
Program Coordinator, CRCD Rural Health Programs
Maintain financial documents and manage budgets for grants and contracts to support the rural offering of the courses.

Amy Topkok
Administrative Assistant, CRCD Rural Health Programs
Provide administrative support to CRCD faculty and staff involved in the program.

IV. **Enrollment Information**

A. **Projected enrollment**

We project an enrollment of approximately 15 students from across the state annually.

B. **How determined/who surveyed/how surveyed**

Projections are based on our experience with the healthcare reimbursement program over the past 5 years and student and employer surveys.

C. **Maximum enrollment which endorsement can accommodate (endorsement capacity)**

Classes will typically allow a maximum of 25 students. Program capacity is limited only by the availability of qualified faculty. Distance delivery mechanisms allow for recruitment of adjunct faculty from all communities across the state, increasing the likelihood of successfully staffing each course.
V. **Need for Occupational Endorsement**

**A. Employment market needs:**
Within the state of Alaska, 79% of the U.S. Census tract areas (including the targeted region) are identified as Health Professional Shortage Areas by the Health Resources and Services Administration Bureau of Health Professions. Eighty-five percent (85%) of these areas are defined as Medically Underserved Areas or Medically Underserved Populations. Projections by the State of Alaska Department of Labor show that health care support is likely to have the highest percentage growth within all occupations from 2004-2014: a 37% growth rate as compared to the state’s projected 14.8% average. To address these shortages, this Medical Billing Occupational Endorsement will specifically train incumbent and entry-level workers in rural Alaska to fill medical billing jobs.

Medical billing positions in Alaska have a 46% vacancy rate with a mean vacancy length of 26 months, and the most commonly cited cause of vacancy is an insufficient pool of qualified applicants. The benefits of local training and hire far outweigh the time and expense of recruiting workers from outside the state. The estimated costs per hire for health professionals working in hospitals and clinics in the lower 48 states is $4,358, while these costs for rural Alaskan hospitals and clinics is approximately $19,543. Thus retaining incumbent employees and maintaining or enhancing their qualification and training status while recruiting local, rural-based entry-level employees are the most cost-effective strategies for meeting the high demand for health care workers.

Biller shortages have reached crisis proportions in some areas of rural Alaska, such that the lack of reimbursement is impacting the ability to deliver quality health care. The courses required for this occupational endorsement have been successfully delivered to rural Alaskan students by a blended delivery combination of on-site visits and distance education, and support from the workplace. Partnerships with tribal, public, and private health corporations have been successful (according to numbers of returning students and continued corporate support).

The State of Alaska has documented the growing need for health care providers and the importance of health care in the statewide economy. In Alaska’s Strategic Two-Year State Plan list of Fastest Growing Occupations, health care fields fill nine out of ten slots in both short- and long-term projections. The Alaska Workforce Investment Board has also created draft training plans using the Alaska Workforce Investment System for the health care industry to help address the shortages of workers in the health care field. This Medical Billing Occupational Endorsement uses the existing distance delivery system to increase the number of health care workers by providing the training needed to prepare students for employment and further education in medical billing, thereby allowing local community residents to fill the high vacancy health care positions in rural Alaska.

VI. **Other**

This program provides students the opportunity to achieve short-term academic success while working toward long-term academic goals. This program effectively removes geographic barriers to higher education while creating a qualified local-hire pool of potential medical billers across the state of Alaska.

04/08
VII. **Relation of Endorsement to other Programs within the System**

The courses in the Medical Billing Occupational Endorsement all exist within the Healthcare Reimbursement Certificate at UAF. These courses represent the subset of program requirements most directly related to gaining employment as a medical biller. This Medical Billing Occupational Endorsement program articulates with the Health Care Reimbursement Certificate program, which contains many of the courses in the distance-delivered AAS in Applied Business with concentration in Health Care Management and the campus-based Medical Assisting program.
VIII. Implementation/Termination

A. Date of implementation

Courses are already in place and scheduled. Implementation of the occupational endorsement will begin Fall 2008.

B. Plans for recruiting students

Recruitment of students will begin this fall, through additional advertising to local medical clinics in Fairbanks, and through our outreach efforts to rural Alaska in CRCID Health Programs.

C. Plans for phasing out endorsement if it proves unsuccessful

Should the Medical Billing Occupational Endorsement be unsuccessful, the program will be cancelled and students will be advised regarding other programs that fit their academic and career interests (particularly programs accepting courses contained in the Medical Billing Occupational Endorsement). Since the course are all required in other programs, we do not anticipate a problem in continuing to allow students to complete their requirements.

D. Assessment of the endorsement.

a. Student outcomes assessment plan

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b. Program review

Faculty meet monthly throughout the academic year to review various aspects of all Allied Health programs. The Medical Billing Occupational Endorsement will be monitored closely. A formal in-house review of the program will be scheduled for Fall of 2010 and every fall thereafter.
October 5, 2007

Torie Foote
Health Programs Director
UAF CRCD
P.O. Box 756510
Fairbanks, AK 99775
(907) 455-2050

Dear Ms. Foote,

The Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG) is pleased to write this letter of commitment to UAF CRCD’s Rural Allied Health Program. As a health care provider witnessing firsthand the need for more local community health care providers and support workers, I am excited by the goals of this project.

This program proposes the implementation of an Administrative Health Care certificate and occupational endorsements in Medical Office Reception, Medical Records, Medical Billing, and Medical Coding. This program additionally proposed to offer Certified Nurse Aide and Personal Care Attendant training in rural Alaska. These education and training opportunities will benefit the CATG in the following ways:

- **BENEFIT ONE** – Providing CATG additional human resource opportunities to help our organization deal with hard to fill positions.
- **BENEFIT TWO** – Provide qualified personnel to meet the job qualifications for these positions in the health field.
- **BENEFIT THREE** – Encourage stability within our organization by training local personnel for jobs within their villages.
- **OTHER BENEFITS** – annual training opportunities available on-site or on-line for current and potential employees.

As the primary health care provider in our region, we are a strategic partner in this project. Our role is to:

- identify incumbent workers to participate in further health care training
- help identify coursework to create a curriculum for clinical health care and support worker educational tracks
- participate in the development of an employee incentive program to increase the number of qualified health care employees
- support staff seeking further education through paid training
- provide tuition supplementation, textbook coverage, or pay raises upon completion of training
Our responsibilities in this project are to participate as collaborative partners with local campus leaders to plan, develop and implement this project. In addition, we will be actively involved on the project advisory board that assesses progress and evaluates project implementation.

Our commitment includes a financial commitment to support current health care employees through tuition and textbook reimbursement or supplementation, use of computers and office space, and paid time off for attending classes. These leveraged resources will total approximately $500 - $1,000.00 per student per semester.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

Ben Stevens, Executive Director
Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments
Torie Foote  
Health Programs Director  UAF CRCD  
P.O. Box 756510  
Fairbanks, AK 99775  

Dear Ms. Foote,

Eastern Aleutian Tribes Inc. is pleased to write this letter of commitment to UAF CRCD’s Rural Allied Health Program. As a health care administrator witnessing firsthand the need for more local community health care providers and support workers, I am excited by the goals of this project.

This program proposes the implementation of an Administrative Health Care certificate and occupational endorsements in Medical Office Reception, Medical Records, Medical Billing, and Medical Coding. This program additionally proposed to offer CNA and PCA training in rural Alaska. These opportunities will benefit Eastern Aleutian Tribes Inc. by developing:

- A shared body of understanding of medical reimbursement issues and procedures
- Updated coding and billing skills
- Improved skills related to customer service in the health care setting
- Delivery of education without travel

As the sole health care provider in our communities, we support this project as a new and additional resource for our staff - one that has characteristics that differ from other options. Our role is to:

- develop our staff through access to a choice of training and educational options
- help identify coursework on which to base curricula for enhancing skills needed on the job
- participate in programs to increase the number of qualified health care instructors
- support staff seeking further training through our Board-approved policies
- investigate options for tuition supplementation, textbook coverage, technology access and support, and time for training, or compensation adjustments upon completion of training, as established by the yearly budget process.

Best wishes on this endeavor!
Sincerely,

Mary M. Rydesky

CID/CLD
Technology & Training
mary@ealtribes.net

Working Together to Promote Health Communities  
Adak • Akutan • Cold Bay • False Pass • King Cove • Nelson Lagoon • Sand Point • Whittier
907-277-1440 • 907-277-1446 (fax)
How does the program relate to the Education mission of the University of Alaska and the MAU?

The Medical Billing Occupational Endorsement consists of existing courses from within the Health Care Reimbursement Certificate program that directly and most succinctly train the student to assume the duties of a medical biller. This occupational endorsement has been generated following discussions with statewide industry representatives who seek medical billers with knowledge of medical reimbursement, medical office technology, and medical terminology. Industry representatives have requested the implementation of programming that could be completed on the way to earning a health care reimbursement certificate (preferably within one year), and that specifically targets the skills needed to successfully function as a medical biller. The courses in the Medical Billing Occupational Endorsement all exist within the Healthcare Reimbursement Certificate at UAF. These courses represent the subset of program requirements most directly related to gaining employment as a medical biller. This Medical Billing Occupational Endorsement program articulates with the Health Care Reimbursement Certificate program, which contains many of the courses in the distance-delivered AAS in Applied Business with concentration in Health Care Management and the campus-based Medical Assisting program. All courses are available live, online and all except one are delivered face-to-face at Tanana Valley Campus. Several courses are available at rural campuses, also.

What State Needs met by this program.

Medical billing positions in Alaska have a 46% vacancy rate with a mean vacancy length of 26 months, and the most commonly cited cause of vacancy is an insufficient pool of qualified applicants. The benefits of local training and hire far outweigh the time and expense of recruiting workers from outside the state. The estimated costs per hire for health professionals working in hospitals and clinics in the lower 48 states is $4,358, while these costs for rural Alaskan hospitals and clinics is approximately $19,543. Thus retaining incumbent employees and maintaining or enhancing their qualification and training status while recruiting local, rural-based entry-level employees are the most cost-effective strategies for meeting the high demand for health care workers.

What are the Student opportunities and outcomes? Enrollment projections?

This program will prepare students for employment as medical billers. Students completing this program can easily transition into the distance-delivered AAS in Applied Business with concentration in Health Care Management and the campus-based Medical Assisting program.

The proposed program also provides students the opportunity to achieve short-term academic success while working toward long-term academic goals. This program effectively removes geographic barriers to higher education while creating a qualified local-hire pool of potential medical billers across the state of Alaska.
We project an enrollment of approximately 15 students from across the state annually. Projections are based on our experience with the healthcare reimbursement program over the past 5 years and student and employer surveys.

**Describe Research opportunities:**

This proposal does not entail any research.

**Describe Fiscal Plan for development and implementation:**

All courses in the proposed occupational endorsement currently exist and are taught every year. If demand for the occupational endorsement outpaces our current course offerings, additional sections will be taught by adjunct faculty on a self-support basis. We do not anticipate any additional costs to the University, TVC or CRCD Health Programs as a result of creating this Occupational Endorsement.