NEW OCCUPATIONAL ENDORSEMENT REQUEST
(UA Regulation 10.04.02)

MEDICAL CODING
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 Coding will consist of courses derived from the Healthcare Reimbursement Certificate Program. This program will prepare students to sit for the national medical coding exam offered by the American Academy of Professional Coders. This program will also prepare students for employment as medical coders. This Medical Coding 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 Coder positions in Alaska have a 55% vacancy rate with a mean vacancy length of 38 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 certification 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.
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 2), and the need for the University to document the effectiveness of the program (items 1 and 3).

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New Occupational Endorsement
Medical Coding

C. Review signatures of preparation:

See Attached letters of support from Industry Representatives

Christa Barlow 5/12/08
Christa Barlow, CMA, CPC
Assistant Professor, Allied Health TVC
Healthcare Reimbursement and Medical Assisting Program Head

Shawn Russell 6/4/08
Assistant Professor, Allied Health
Rural Allied Health Programs Coordinator

Marina Sousa 5/12/08
Associate Professor, Allied Health
TVCA Allied Health Programs Coordinator
GRCD Allied Health, Division Chair

Toni Foote 6/5/08
Director, Rural Health Programs

Richard A. Caulfield 5/12/08
Director, Tamana Valley Campus

Ron Illingworth 6/9/08
Chair
College of Rural and Community Development Academic Council

Bernice Joseph
Executive Dean, College of Rural and Community Development

04/08
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Professor
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Bernice Joseph
Executive Dean, College of Rural and Community Development

Date: 23 April 2008
Signatures for approval:

Ilana Kingsley, Curricular Affairs Committee Chair

Date

Jon Genetti, President, UAF Faculty Senate

Date

Stephen Jones, Chancellor UAF

Date

Mark Hamilton, President UA

Date
II. Identification of the Endorsement

A. Description of the Occupational Endorsement

1. Occupational Endorsement in Medical Coding

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
   iii. Previous health care work experience is strongly recommended

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

**CIOS 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 CIOS 110, 130, 134 and 146. No previous computer experience is required.) (1-3 + 0) Offered As Demand Warrants

**HLTH 208 3 Credits**
**Human Diseases**
Introduction to the study of human diseases. Pathogenesis, etiology and predisposing factors will be examined. The most common diseases and disorders of each body system are presented along with a review of the pertinent anatomy and physiology. Includes the effects of aging on the system and the relationship of aging to disease. Web-based course. (Prerequisites: HLTH 100 or permission from the instructor) (3+0) Offered Fall, As Demand Warrants

**HLTH 235 4 Credits**
**Medical Coding**
In-depth study of Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) and the International Classification of diseases (ICD) systems used in the medical setting. Examines the medical and legal uses of the CPT and ICD code systems in inpatient and outpatient
medical settings, urgent care settings, billing departments and ancillary medical professions. Prepares students to take national certification exams. (Recommended: HLTH 100, 132, 208 and 234.) (4+0) Offered As Demand Warrants

4. Requirements for the endorsement.

A. Proposed catalog layout

Allied Health

Occupational Endorsement: Medical Coding

The Occupational Endorsement in Medical Coding provides education and training for medical office workers in medical terminology, medical office technology, human diseases, and medical coding. This program prepares students to sit for the national medical coding exam offered by the American Academy of Professional Coders.

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 208 – Human Diseases (3)
   HLTH 235 – Medical Coding (4)*

Minimum requirements for the endorsement (13)
* Must complete HLTH 235 with a B or better

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)</td>
<td>HLTH 100 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CIOS 150 (3)</td>
<td>CIOS 150 (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HLTH 208 (3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>HLTH 235 (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd semester</td>
<td></td>
<td>HLTH 208 (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HLTH 235 (4)</td>
</tr>
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</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>
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<td>X</td>
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TVC Schedule

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Each course is offered at least annually at TVC. 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 dual objective of the Medical Coding Occupational Endorsement is to:

1) Provide a medical coding credential that enhances employability by including online and on-campus medical coding coursework that targets the skills needed for entry level employment as a medical coder in the state of Alaska.

2) Prepare students to sit for the national medical coding exam.

The success of the program will be evaluated according to number of students successfully completing the program and number of students passing a national medical coding exam.

2. Relationship of endorsement objectives to industry needs
New Occupational Endorsement
Medical Coding

Certified Coder positions in Alaska have a 55% vacancy rate with a mean vacancy length of 38 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 certification 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.

Coder 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, human diseases, and medical coding. They will be prepared to pass the national certification exam to become Certified Professional Coders.

4. Relationship of courses to the endorsement objectives

The four areas in which students need to have competency are medical terminology (HLTH 100), medical office technology (HLTH 130), Human Diseases (HLTH 208), and Medical Coding (HLTH 235). Professional coder exams cover knowledge of medical terminology, human diseases, and medical coding. Coding employment requires an understanding of medical office technology.

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

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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, date of Certified Professional Coder (CPC) exam, scores on CPC exams 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 235 Medical Coding and HLTH 100 Medical Terminology. Advise rural students in the Medical Coding 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.
New Occupational Endorsement
Medical Coding

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 Coding Occupational Endorsement will specifically train incumbent and entry-level workers in rural Alaska to fill medical coding jobs.

Medical Coder positions in Alaska have a 55% vacancy rate with a mean vacancy length of 38 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 certification 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.

Coder 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 Coding 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 coding, 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 coders across the state of Alaska.
VII. Relation of Endorsement to other Programs within the System

The courses in the Medical Coding Occupational Endorsement all exist within the Healthcare Reimbursement Certificate at UAF. These courses represent the subset of program requirements most directly related to successfully passing the passing national medical coding exams. This Medical Coding 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 Coding 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 Coding 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 Coding 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 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 736510  
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. Rydlesky

CIO/CLD  
Technology & Training  
mary@easttribes.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 Coding 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 coder. This occupational endorsement has been generated following discussions with statewide industry representatives who seek medical coders with knowledge of medical coding, medical office technology, human diseases, 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 coder. The courses in the Medical Coding 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 coder. This Medical Coding 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 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 Coder positions in Alaska have a 55% vacancy rate with a mean vacancy length of 38 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 certification 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 coders. This program also will prepare students to sit for the national medical coding exam offered several times annually by the American Academy of Professional Coders. 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 coders 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.