

AAPC announces Project Xtern. A commitment to our members, and to the development and growth of our new professionals, and to the integrity of our credentials.

Who does this effect?

- Newly certified members
- Educational institutions who offer a coding/billing program
- Program Coordinators/Extern Coordinators
- PMCC instructors
- Facilities

Background:

- Currently there are more than 360 educational institutions offering the medical coding/billing programs in the United States. The students who attend these programs are typically required to spend anywhere from 180-300 hours as a “student extern” to gain valuable experience and begin the practical portion of their educational program which is intended to begin the development of necessary medical coding/billing skills and for the opportunity to gain experience in the medical coding/billing profession.

The Problem:

- Often times, these newly certified members are placed in facilities and never given the opportunity to gain the practical experience that is required from both the educational program and the State which certifies the course the student has attended. They are often left doing other tasks that are agreeably important to the facility but have little or nothing to do with the medical coding profession.

The Resolution:

- To help newly certified, CPC-A, CPC-H-A, or CPC-P-A and the hiring facility, AAPC announces Project Xtern—a program designed to match beginning coders with facilities willing to give them field experience.

The Process

- The AAPC will locate facilities across the United States to become an American Academy of Professional Coders-Approved Official Extern Site, (AAPC-AOES). They will complete an agreement (which can be accessed on our web site www.aapc.com, under Education) to be returned to the AAPC committing to the development and mentorship of our newly certified AAPC members. The agreement provides the AAPC member a guarantee of a minimum of 60 percent hands on coding/billing experience while completing their externship with that facility. The facility will receive a certificate verifying that they have committed to the requirements of our new members and shall display it in a prominent location for the new member externs to view upon their interview.

- The facility understands that the externs are typically placed at their facility for the required extern hours (typically 3 months) and are typically non paid. This will allow the student to gain valuable skills during their mentorship and allow the facility to examine the work habits, work ethics and abilities of the extern for employment placement if available at the end of the externship. If the facility finds that an offer would be extended to the extern this will allow the facility an additional 90 days of probationary period to examine the new employee's work habits. For any facility this is a Win! Win! Who would not like the opportunity to train their staff at no cost to the facility for a period of typically three months and then have an additional three months while in the 90 day new hire probation period. The extern gains from the facilities valuable mentorship and the facility gains from the excellent assistance a new coder can bring to the team while under the non-paid externship and then if available an additional 90 day new hire probation.
- The AAPC-AOES Facility will only allow AAPC members into their facility for superior mentorship's. All members wishing to be placed at the AAPC-AOES site must be a certified member in good standing with the AAPC.
- The AAPC will have the list of AAPC-AOES facilities on the www.aapc.com web site. We will also publish the updated list each month in the *Coding Edge*. AAPC members will know in advance if they are going to be placed in a facility which has committed to the quality of their career's future from the facility status of AAPC-AOES.
- This opportunity is being shared with our medical coding community members, facilities, PMCC instructors, Program Directors, Extern Coordinators and educational institutions across the United States.

We encourage facilities that desire to be part of our program to complete the agreement (which can be accessed on our web site www.aapc.com, under Education) and fax it back to 801-236-2258. The facility will be added to the AAPC-AOES sites list and a certificate will be sent via mail to the facility.

Students of any medical coding curriculum who are required by the program to complete an externship, or those students who have taken a private PMCC program or a program that does not require a mandatory externship, and upon completion of this course and at their own volition wish to complete a medical coding externship for the invaluable experience and mentorship should log onto www.aapc.com to download the membership information. Only those candidates that are certified with current membership and in good standing with the AAPC will be sent to the AAPC-AOES sites for externship consideration.

We hope you are as pleased as we are about "Project Xtern." The AAPC remains committed to the medical coding/billing profession and the continued education and development of all of our members.

For more information including FAQs please visit www.aapc.com and click on the Project Xtern icon.

Sincerely,



Heidi Larsen
Program Manager
AAPC