From the President’s Desk

By Monte Handley

On May 31, 2012, I stepped down as the President of HIT CIM Student Peer Club (HCSPC), after serving as your club president for over a year. I will remain active on the club serving as one of the club Advisory Committee members. As one of the original founders of the club, I am pleased to have seen the significant progress the club has made over the last year. We started in May of 2011 as four ambitious student members, along with our guiding club advisor Gwyer Schuyler, all whom wanted to start the club from nothing more than an idea. From there we got to work right away and created a club charter along with a club mission statement. In our very first newsletter release I made a promise to the then thirty or so club members that HCSPC would create a regular monthly newsletter, a Facebook page, a Google Groups page, and a HCSPC YouTube channel. I am pleased to say that all of those goals have been met. Finally, by reaching out to the SBCC HIT, CIM, and Medical Coding students for membership, we have grown from our original four student

Home Health Claims Are Miscoded Says OIG

By Anthony Pineda

According to the Office of Inspector General (OIG), Medicare home health payments “increased 84 percent from $8.5 billion in 2000 to $15.7 billion in 2007.” In order to determine whether Medicare coverage requirements were met, the medical records from home health agencies (HHAs) were reviewed and the claims submitted by HHAs were analyzed. The results of the medical record reviews lead “to concerns about the potential for improper payments due to fraud and abuse.” In order to continue to monitor Medicare home health claims to determine whether the services are appropriate and merit payment, the OIG will use concentrated and sustained efforts and use a variety of tools that go beyond medi-
Completing English and Math toward the Associate Degree

By Gwyer Schuyler

Completing English and Math toward the Associate Degree

If you are pursuing the HIT AS Degree or the CIM AS Degree, then you are subject to SBCC’s General Education requirements. All General Education requirements can be fulfilled with online courses through SBCC EXCEPT FOR English Composition and Intermediate Algebra. While SBCC offers ENG 110 English Composition and Reading and MATH 107 Intermediate Algebra in a fully online format, students must meet the prerequisites to get into those courses. Here are the ways that a student could take ENG 110 and MATH 107 through SBCC online:

1. Student comes to SBCC, takes the in-person assessment tests, and places directly into ENG 110 and MATH 107. I rarely recommend this because our assessment tests are challenging and students often place lower than these courses.

2. Student comes to SBCC, takes the in-person assessment tests, and places directly into ENG 110 and places one level lower in Math into MATH 100. Since MATH 100 is offered online, a student would be able to complete both MATH 100 and 107 online.

NOTE: If a student places into a lower English course than ENG 110, then the student will not be able to complete the English requirement through SBCC online because the lower level English classes of ENG 70, 80, and 100 are not offered fully online. Similarly, if a student places into MATH 1 or 4, then he/she will not be able to complete the requirement online through SBCC because those courses are not offered online either.

3. Student has completed Elementary Algebra at another college and has submitted a prerequisite challenge form A (available at www.sbcc.edu/hit/courseprerequisites.php) with transcripts to have the prerequisite hold released to be allowed to enroll in MATH 107.

NOTE: Unlike the example above with Math, English coursework below Freshman English Composition is not accepted by SBCC to meet the prerequisite for ENG 110.

If a student has previously completed English Composition and Intermediate Algebra (or higher) through another college, then he/she needs to submit a prerequisite challenge form A with transcripts (unless they are already on file with Admissions) to have them evaluated toward our GE requirements.

One last note – if you already have a Bachelor’s degree, then the English requirement is met based on that alone.

For further information on assessment testing, go to www.sbcc.edu/hit/assessment.

RHIT Certification Exam Prep

This interactive one-day seminar is designed to strengthen and reinforce competencies needed to prepare you for the RHIT or RHIA Certification Exam. It will focus on RHIT domain competencies covering content related to:

- Health Services, Organization & Delivery
- Health Care Statistical Analysis
- Quality Management (Utilization, Risk and Improvement)
- Legal Concepts
- Information Technology & Systems
- Management and Supervision Concepts

Saturday, July 14, 2012 in Duarte, CA
Saturday, July 21, 2012 in Dublin, CA
members to currently over 186 members.

In our last HCSPC admin member meeting held on May 26th, Gagan Bal was unanimously elected as the new President of HCSPC for the 2012/2013 school year. She begins her tenure as President effective June 1. Gagan has served as the Club Vice President for the last nine months. During her VP tenure, Gagan has shown devoted drive and commitment to the club. She created the club logo, served as moderator for all admin meetings, and has been the driving force to many current and future year club projects. Please join me in welcoming Gagan as our new HCSPC President!

I would like to conclude by saying it has been a pleasure to have served as your club President for the past year, and by giving thanks to those SBCC HIT/CIM and Medical Coding students who have stood by HCSPC through all of our club growing pains, and I end with a promise to all of our current and future members that HCSPC will have a tremendous amount to offer in the upcoming year, as our club expands and develops under the leadership of our new club President.

Very First Online Graduation Ceremony

A Huge Degree of Success!

By Monte Handley

On May 17, the SBCC offered the very first online graduation ceremony to all HIT, CIM and Medical Coding graduating students who could not attend the usual on campus event. As one of the 30 plus online graduation attendees, I can tell you that it was a very unique and great experience that I want to share with all of you.

The SBCC HIT/CIM Medical Coding programs at SBCC are 100% online. Most students in the program live and work at a distance that is too far for their travel to the actual campus; therefore, most of these students are unable to attend the on campus graduation ceremony. The HIT/CIM department came up with a solution for those students by offering a live Virtual Commencement ceremony. Interested graduating students responded to an email invite with their full name, a personal photo, the degree and/or certificate they earned.

The principal architects of the Virtual Graduation include Denise Harrison (HIT/CIM Department Chair), Doug Hersh (Dean for Educational Programs), and Monique Trotter (Online Support Services). Also assisting in the event creation were Lynette Williamson (HIT & Coding Faculty) and Janet Robertson (HIT & Coding Faculty). The ceremony began at 5 pm and presenting via “live” video during the ceremony were Jack Friedlander (SBCC Acting Superintendent & President), Marilynn Spaventa (Acting Executive Vice President), and Betty Pazich (Dean “Health & Human Services). Participants and spectators which included graduating student friends and family, tuned into the event prior to the start via CCC Confer website (virtual online training conference center) on their computers, and were connected to the audio of the event through a toll free call in number. Students were able to communicate to each other online during the event through instant messaging, and were able to do a virtual clap of their hands. Prior to the actual ceremony, a slideshow was presented which showed quotes from SBCC faculty and graduating students. As the commencement progressed, the names and degrees and certificates earned by each student were read “one by one” alternately by Friedlander and Spaventa. At the end of the ceremony, a short congratulatory statement to all online graduates was proclaimed by Friedlander, and just afterwards our computer screens vividly flashed a “Congratulations to the Graduating Class of 2012”!

Next year SBCC will offer the same online ceremony (which name has been officially changed from “Virtual Graduation” to “The Online Graduation”), and I highly recommend...
Missed Claims from Page 1

cal record reviews. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is cracking down, therefore, it is imperative that coders are aware of the results of this report because they are significant.

The OIG report found that HHAs submitted 22 percent of claims in error because services were not medically necessary or claims were coded inaccurately, resulting in $432 million in improper Medicare payments. What I found disturbing was that 10 percent of the errors were because claims were billed at a higher level than the conditions warranted (upcoded) and another 10 percent of the errors were because claims were billed at a lower level (downcoded) than the conditions warranted. The other 2 percent of the errors were claims that did not show medical necessity. The estimated overpayments for upcoded claims were $278 million and estimated for downcoded underpayments were $184 million.

### Specified Items Missing From Home Health Plans of Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan of Care Item</th>
<th>% of Plan of Care Item Not Documented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discharge plan</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation potential</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructions for timely discharge or referral</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of visits to be made</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of services, supplies, and equipment required</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prognosis</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional limitations</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental status</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities permitted</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutritional requirements</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All medications and treatments</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety measures to protect against injury</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Percentage of Miscoded Home Health Services, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Error</th>
<th>Error Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incorrect code</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upcoded</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downcoded</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medically unnecessary services</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient documentation</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total error rate</strong></td>
<td><strong>21.8%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Now more than ever it is important for students to stay abreast on:

- regulatory rules and requirements pertaining to coding, billing, and documentation
- specific government and private payer reimbursement principles
- the impact of documentation on the clinical, operational, and financial aspects of healthcare delivery
- the relationship of coding to documentation

It seems that coding is shifting from a task (e.g., assigning ICD-9 code to a diagnosis) to a role where acumen and intuition are required to identify deficiencies on the fly.

### About the OIG

The Office of Inspector General’s (OIG) mission is to protect the integrity of Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) programs as well as the health and welfare of program beneficiaries.
Attn: HIM/CIM Department
721 Cliff Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93109
sbcc.hcspc@gmail.com

Club description:
To provide an avenue for HIT/CIM students to network and support each other in their academic and career pursuits. Because the HIT/CIM programs are fully online, students have limited opportunities to meet and connect with other students.

Online Graduation from Page 3

that all graduating HIT CIM and Medical Coding students plan on attending the event. When I commented to Janet Robertson that I thought the event went really well, she responded back, “I agree. I loved it! I really liked the way no student went by without a "Way to go" from one of the other students”.

The “Ceremony” will be archived on the HIT/CIM website http://www.sbcc.edu/hit and will be available at a later date.

OIG Student Diversity Volunteer
Internship Program FAQ

The Program provides students with the opportunity to gain valuable work experience while working with agency's Office of Investigations.

2012 HCSPC Admin Committee Members:
Academic Club Advisor: Gwyer Schuyler

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club Officers: Gagandeep Bal – President</th>
<th>Advisory Committee: Monte Handley Devan Safer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marcia Coye – Secretary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kim Graff - Treasurer</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter Committee: Monte Handley — Contributor</td>
<td>Anthony Pineda—Publisher/Contributor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwyer Schuyler—Contributor</td>
<td>Alice Yan—Publisher</td>
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