What is Health Information Technology?

Health information technology involves the processing of all types of health information, and focuses on legal, accreditation, licensure and certification standards. HIT involves reimbursement, facility planning, marketing, risk management, utilization management, quality assessment and research. Graduates may work in hospitals, in doctor’s offices, for healthcare vendors, or for government and non-profit agencies. Learn more about the career at www.ahima.org.

Length of Program

4 semesters, Program begins in the Fall, Mostly Day courses

General Admission Application Process

1. Apply to Gwinnett Technical College at www.gwinnetttech.edu, submit all transcripts from high school and previous college work, and take the COMPASS test if required (You must be accepted into Gwinnett Tech prior to applying to a program of study.)
2. Applicants are initially accepted into the Healthcare Science Certificate program while completing the required prerequisite courses

Program Application Process

1. All applicants are required to submit a Health Information Management Technology program packet by the file completion deadline. The Health Information Management Technology program packets are available online at http://www.gwinnetttech.edu/enrollment/forms-documents/
2. For Fall 2016 semester admission, the program application and all prerequisites must be completed by July 24th, 2016.

Prerequisite Courses

- Composition and Rhetoric-ENGL 1101,
- College Algebra-MATH 1111,
- Medical Terminology-ALHS 1090,
- Anatomy and Physiology I with Lab-BIOL 2113 and BIOL 2113L*,
- Anatomy and Physiology II with Lab-BIOL 2114 and BIOL 2114L*
- Human Pathological Conditions-MAST 1120
- Intro to Psychology – PSYC 1101

Additional Required Courses

One of the following:
- Introduction to Humanities-HUMN 1101,
- Art Appreciation-ARTS 1101, Music Appreciation-MUSC 1101 or
- American Literature-ENGL 2130

Competitive Admissions

First Year Experience Seminar-Fyes 1000 is preferred that it is taken prior to program start date but can be taken during the first semester in the program. Transfer students with 30 or more transferrable credit hours will be exempt from taking FYES 1000.

*.Courses may not be more than 5 years old at time of program application

Admissions for the Health Information Technology program is based on a minimum 2.5 GPA. GPA is calculated using all attempts of prerequisite courses. Applicants who have completed their prerequisites are accepted into the program on a first come, first served basis.

For more information, contact:

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tthurmond@gwinnetttech.edu 678-226-6404 Building 200, Office Room 213

Everyone is welcome to attend our Information Session held on the 3rd Thursday of each month* at 6:00 p.m. in Building 200, Room 246

*There will NOT be an Information Session in December*

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Health Information Technology

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Nature of the Work

Medical records and health information technicians assemble patients’ health information, including medical history, symptoms, examination results, diagnostic tests, treatment methods, and all other healthcare provider services. Technicians organize and manage health information data by ensuring its quality, accuracy, accessibility, and security. They regularly communicate with physicians and other healthcare professionals to clarify diagnoses or to obtain additional information.

The increasing use of electronic health records (EHR) will continue to broaden and alter the job responsibilities of health information technicians. For example, with the use of EHRs, technicians must be familiar with EHR computer software, maintaining EHR security, and analyzing electronic data to improve healthcare information. Health information technicians use EHR software to maintain data on patient safety, patterns of disease, and disease treatment and outcome. Technicians also may assist with improving EHR software usability and may contribute to the development and maintenance of health information networks.

Medical records and health information technicians’ duties vary with the size of the facility where they work. Technicians can specialize in many aspects of health information. Some medical records and health information technicians specialize in codifying patients’ medical information for reimbursement purposes. Technicians who specialize in coding are called medical coders or coding specialists. Medical coders assign a code to each diagnosis and procedure by using classification systems software. The classification system determines the amount for which Medicare, Medicaid, or other insurance programs will reimburse healthcare providers. Coders may use several coding systems, such as those required for ambulatory settings, physician offices, or long-term care.

Medical records and health information technicians also may specialize in cancer registry. Cancer (or tumor) registrars maintain facility, regional, and national databases of cancer patients. Registrars review patient records and pathology reports, and assign codes for the diagnosis and treatment of different cancers and selected benign tumors. Registrars conduct annual follow-ups to track treatment, survival, and recovery. This information is used to calculate survivor rates and success rates of various types of treatment, to locate geographic areas with high incidences of certain cancers, and to identify potential participants for clinical drug trials.

Work Environment

Medical records and health information technicians work in pleasant and comfortable offices. This is one of the few health-related occupations in which there is no direct hands-on patient care. Medical records and health information technicians usually work a typical 40-hour week. Some overtime may be required. In health facilities that are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, technicians may work day, evening, and night shifts. Health information technicians held about 188,600 jobs in 2014. Most health information technicians work in hospitals or physicians’ offices.

Employment

Medical records and health information technicians held about 186,300 jobs nationally in 2014. About 39 percent of jobs were in hospitals. Health information technicians work at a number of healthcare providers such as offices of physicians, nursing care facilities, outpatient care centers, and home.
healthcare services. Technicians also gain employment outside of healthcare facilities, such as in federal government agencies. Employment of medical records and health information technicians is expected to increase by 21 percent, faster than the average for all occupations through 2020. Employment growth will result from the increase in the number of medical tests, treatments, and procedures that doctors perform.

**Earnings**

The median annual wage nationally of medical records and health information technicians was $34,160 in 2012. The lowest 10 percent earned less than $21,240, and the highest 10 percent earned more than $53,430.

**Job Outlook**

Employment of health information technicians is projected to grow 15 percent from 2014 to 2024, much faster than the average for all occupations. The demand for health services is expected to increase as the population ages.

**How to Become a Health Information Management Technologist**

Health information technicians typically need a postsecondary certificate to enter the occupation, although some may need an associate’s degree. Certification is often required.