

F.Y.I. about H.I.M.

News from the Health Information Management Programs

November 2002

SD Board of Regents Approve Additional HIM Educational Opportunities

The South Dakota Board of Regents approved a new health care coding certificate program for the 2002 Fall Semester. Dakota State University will offer a health care coding certificate which will be available on the Madison campus and in Sioux Falls at USDSU. This 34-credit certificate program prepares students with entry-level skills needed to code, classify and index diagnoses and procedures for reimbursement and data retrieval. The health care coding certificate program is an outgrowth of certification changes at the American Health Information Management Association, the national organization that provides certification for health information management professionals. The AHIMA has endorsed a specialized curriculum related to their new health care coding certification exam.

In addition, approval was also granted by the Board of Regents for DSU to begin offering the existing associate degree in health information technology at the USDSU Center in Sioux Falls. Increased job opportunities are expected for people holding degrees in health information technology. The HIT degree that is offered at DSU and USDSU will prepare students for work in hospitals, clinics and other kinds of health centers. Graduates are eligible to complete the national certification examination in order to become registered health information technicians.

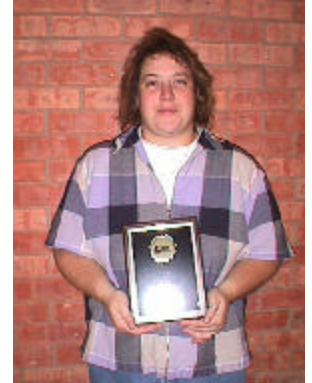
HIM Information Provided to Students

During the Fall 2002 semester, several activities have been available in order for DSU students to learn more about HIM. Information was shared with visitors to a Majors Fair held at the Trojan Center in September. HIM faculty and students visited with new Freshmen and others at the Freshmen Success Seminars and the Center of Excellence Internship Showcase presentations.

Students in non-HIM majors who are interested in working in the healthcare industry in their particular field are invited to complete health information management courses as electives in order to enhance their skills.

HIM Student Receives SDHIMA Award

Angela Powell recently was awarded the South Dakota Health Information Management Association's New Frontier Award. This award encourages a gifted student who embodies hope as we look forward. This student must have the capacity to envision the "big picture"; have the willingness to challenge tradition; talk and think critically; and to lead others through these processes. Angela Powell graduated from Dakota State University in August of 2002 with an associate degree in Health Information Technology. She was a nontraditional student with family and job obligations. Angela returned to school working toward the goals she set for herself; she was very willing to work hard and was very committed to making her educational experience successful. While a student at DSU, she was a very active and involved member of the Health Information Management Club. Angela plans to sit for the national registered health information technician (RHIT) exam. Angela's award was recognized at the awards banquet during the South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organization's annual convention at Rapid City, SD in September.



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Dakota State HIM students benefit from loan forgiveness program

The Health Information Management Program at Dakota State University is helping students financially through the Sioux Valley Hospital USD Medical Center Student Loan Forgiveness Program. The program offers students a financial resource, assisting students with expenses in association with completion of their health information management degree. Sioux Valley Hospital USD Medical Center will provide money to students in return for the students' agreement to become employed full-time at Sioux Valley Hospital USD Medical Center for a period of time following graduation.

"This program will benefit the students by providing some financial assistance," Dorine Bennett, DSU HIM director said. "Students may already be interested in applying at the facility and working there, so this will fit into their plans." The benefits are described as follows:

- Eligible students must be enrolled full time in their final year in an accredited HIM program and must successfully graduate and successfully pass the appropriate certification exam following graduation.
- Recipients will receive \$8000 paid to the student. This money will be paid to the student during the final year of enrollment - with \$4000 paid to the student at the beginning of each semester.
- Recipients agree to work for Sioux Valley Hospital USD Medical Center in the HIM field in a full-time status for three years.
- Failure to comply with the requirements of the program will result in repayment of the loan with interest.

"The program came about because of the need for qualified applicants for health information management positions," Bennett said. "Many health care facilities are finding that they have positions that are remaining open because they haven't been able to find people to hire. It is hoped that this incentive will encourage students to enter the HIM profession or encourage current students to apply for positions at Sioux Valley Hospital USD Medical Center."

For those who decide not to apply for a job at Sioux Valley after getting the assistance, it would be a loan they will need to repay.

South Dakota Health Information Management Association Awards Scholarship for 2002-2003 Academic Year

The SDHIMA Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce the SDHIMA scholarship winners for academic year 2002-2003. A \$1,000 scholarship was awarded to Stacy Smidt - an HIA major at Dakota State University from Aurora, SD. A \$500 scholarship has been awarded to Jennifer Horstman - an HIA major at Dakota State University from Harrisburg, SD. SDHIMA Scholarship winners were recognized at the Awards Luncheon, held in conjunction with the SDAHO Convention in Rapid City in September.

The SDHIMA scholarship committee - Julie Huwe, Pam Schmidt and Jamie Erpenbach would like to thank all SDHIMA Scholarship applicants. Each HIM/HIT student in the state of South Dakota is encouraged to apply for the annual SDHIMA scholarships.



National Certification Exam Results

The American Health Information Management Association report on student results from the Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT) and Registered Health Information Administrator (RHIA) exams provided good news regarding the DSU graduates. The list included results from all test takers in the time period from 07/01/01 through 06/30/02. Both the RHIT and RHIA exams had 100% pass rates for the DSU students!

DSU students for both HIT and HIA majors complete an exit exam prior to graduation. This exam is modeled after the national certification exams and the results are reviewed with the students.

SDHIMA Supports HIM Program Recruitment Efforts

The professionals in the health information management field are aware of a shortage of qualified applicants for the ever-increasing number of job openings for workers in their areas. In an effort to attract potential students and future employees to the HIM careers, the SDHIMA Board recently cooperated with the HIM Program in placing advertising in the SD School Counselor Association Newsletter.

Other HIM Program recruitment efforts have included brochure distribution and career fair attendance. SDHIMA members are also invited to support the HIM Program in recruiting.