September 2016

Community College Partners with Industry Association Foundation to Develop Health Information Management National Competency Framework

➢ Developing competency-based curricula in health information management
➢ Establishing a national web portal to enable users to access competency-based curricula online
➢ Updating the competencies for a technology-focused health information management certification

Introduction

Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC), a Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grantee, is partnering with the AHIMA Foundation, the 501(c)3 charitable affiliate of the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), to develop a new national competency framework and credentials related to information technology in health information management (HIM). AHIMA and the AHIMA Foundation served as industry champions in the development of the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) Electronic Health Records Competency Model.

Workforce Need

From a national perspective, the outlook for medical records and health information technicians is strong. According to projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), employment in this occupation is projected to grow 15% from 2014 to 2024, much faster than the 6.5% average for all occupations. BLS expects employment opportunities in this occupation to grow by 29,000 jobs during the decade, contributing to 71,200 job openings due to that growth combined with the need to replace workers in doctors' offices, outpatient care centers, home healthcare services, hospitals, and nursing and residential care facilities. [1]

Approach

With funding from a 2014 TAACCCT grant, LFCC implemented the "Knowledge2Work" (K2W) initiative to establish new competency-based education (CBE) degree programs, including an AAS degree in health information management. The K2W project has been accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission of Colleges to offer these programs through direct assessment of competencies, the only college in the association's 11- state region to attain this achievement. Other program features include wrap-around student support services including veterans' services correlating military job experience into competencies; collaboration with local employers to ensure that competencies reflect workforce needs; and creation of a national web portal (http://highered.org) that enables users to access many features of the college's CBE programs online, find information on career pathways, and create personalized learning plans tied to competencies. [2]

"After establishing the K2W initiative at the local level, we moved on to a national perspective," says Dr. John Milam, Executive Director, K2W. "We received additional TAACCCT funding to work with the AHIMA Foundation and other subject matter experts to develop a new national competency framework focused on information technology in health information management."

As a first step, the AHIMA Foundation has begun the work of conducting a comprehensive job analysis, starting with the updating of competencies identified for AHIMA's Certified Healthcare

---

[1] Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment Projections. Also see, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2016-2017 Edition, Medical Records and Health Information Technician.

[2] CAEL, http://www.cael.org/cbe/publication/lordfairfax

Technology Specialist (CHTS) exam. "Though AHIMA offers several certifications related to health information management, the CHTS certification was selected due to changes in technology in the marketplace which have redefined the role of the health information professional and created a need to update the credential to align with these new competencies and skills," says Dr. William Rudman, Executive Director, AHIMA Foundation. "To meet the goals of this initiative, the AHIMA Foundation and AHIMA Certifications team have convened two meetings of subject matter experts, with participants including representatives from clinical settings, community colleges, and related organizations. In addition, a survey was developed and disseminated to individuals who hold a CHTS certification to obtain their input. Following completion of these activities, the updated certification will be launched. Efforts are also underway, in collaboration with ETA, to update the Electronic Health Records Competency Model to ensure alignment with the competencies and skills needed to ensure market-readiness."

Next Steps

"With the partnership between Lord Fairfax Community College and the AHIMA Foundation, we are striving to achieve our four key goals by March 2018," says Dr. Milam. "These are: 1) establishment of a national competency framework related to information technology in HIM; 2) development of corresponding credentials; 3) formation of matching curricular materials; and 4) creation of a new national credentialing exam."

Related Links

American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA)
http://www.ahima.org

AHIMA Foundation
http://www.ahimafoundation.org

Lord Fairfax Community College, Knowledge to Work
https://www.lfcc.edu/about-lfcc/knowledge-to-work/

HigherEd.org
https://www.highered.org/health-information-management.php

Knowledge to Work (K2W):

A Portal for Competencies and Individualized Learning

Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC)

173 Skirmisher Lane

Middletown, VA 22645-1745

KnowledgeToWork.com

HigherEd.org

LFCC.edu