GET YOUR FIRST JOB

IN MEDICAL CODING

Laureen Jandroep
CPC, CPC-H, CPC-I, CMSCS, CHCI, CPPM

❤️ *Special thanks to [Lori Jaramillo, CPC](#) for her contributions to this report.* ❤️

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Introduction

Looking for a job can be a stressful process. That's why we set out to create a simple guide that showcases what employers want. The more inside information you have, the more confident and comfortable you will be. "Get Your First Job in Medical Coding" provides you with tips for writing a cover letter, resume, acing an interview, and lets you peek behind the curtain to find out what employers are really looking for in a potential candidate. All this information is based on real-life interviews with medical coders, healthcare recruiters and more. These are the people who are hiring people like you and they share specific information about what will land you that first medical coding interview.

For example, did you know that employers not only want to know about your work experience, but they also want to know if you know about their company? Have you done your research? It's important to know some facts about the company for which you are applying for a job. That's why it's a good idea to state why you want to work for the company in your cover letter.

When it comes to the resume, it's a good idea to use active words to describe your attributes, and if you land the interview, prepare yourself for some open-ended questions; we'll show you how.

So, go ahead and dive into, "Get Your First Job in Medical Coding." Start preparing today, so you can start your new medical coding job tomorrow.

What do Employers Want?

Once you have a good idea as to what employers are looking for, you will have a better idea on where to start when it comes to writing the resume, cover letter and eventually attending the interview. Do they focus on education? Do certified coders get noticed first? We interviewed several employers to find out what factors mean the most to them.

Education and Certifications

Liz Wilson, CCS, RHIT, CEMC, CPMA, Director of Coding and Auditing, Compliance Officer

at **Healthcare Solutions of WNY**, Cheektowaga, NY says that when she needs to fill a medical coder position, she focuses on candidates who have completed their coding education and are certified.

She says that when it comes to education, she typically prefers that the coder is a graduate of an associate-degree program. However, she does not discount candidates who have graduated from a 6-month coding-specific program.

"There are many of these programs available, so it is actually more likely that I will find a candidate who has no coding degree and only minimal coding education," she says.

Melinda Kollin, Coding Manager at **Anesthesia Business Consultants,** headquartered in Jackson, MI, says she will also consider inexperienced candidates if they can pass a test the company gives them during an interview, and if there is an overall feeling that they are capable of doing the job and have the knowledge to do the job.

"If there are issues with their knowledge, or if they hesitate about the test or cannot answer the questions, I will not hire them," she says. "However, if they show me, during the interview, that they are willing to learn and work hard on the items that they are not as familiar with, then I will likely hire them."

Kollin says that it does not matter what program they have graduated from as long as they have had the coding classes and possess the knowledge to do the job.

"A CPC credential, or someone in the process of getting their CPC, will likely stand out more as well," she says.

Carrie Young, BS, CPC, Manager, Coding Unit, **Springfield Clinic**, Springfield, IL, like the others, is also happy to interview someone without prior experience. She will grant an interview, check references, and determine whether or not the candidate is a good fit.

However, she does prefer someone with a certification.

"While the educational program they have graduated from does not play a big role for me, I do prefer a candidate who is AAPC certified and has perhaps done an externship," she says.

Healthcare recruiters tend to be a different animal.

Alisha Ableson, Healthcare Recruiter, **Harper Associates** in Farmington Hills, MI, says that a

person with no experience would not be eligible for hire through a staffing agency.

"Employers pay us a placement fee to find a seasoned candidate who needs little or no training," she says. "Candidates would also have to fit the criteria that pertains to the specific industry (e.g., family practice, internal medicine).

As far as education goes, she says that their clients will dictate which credentials are required and they then recruit coders that match their preference.

How Does The CPC-A Apprenticeship Affect Me?

To be successful in getting interviews and landing a job as a newly credentialed coder, you may need to perform more preparation to enter the job market as a CPC-A. There is no easy path to getting a job without due diligence, patience and persistence.

The medical coding field is no different than any other field of employment when a potential candidate is brand new with no coding experience. For example, a law student just having passed the BAR exam does not automatically get handed a job as a lawyer; they too have to go through a hiring process just like any career field and medical coding is not different.

Similar to Liz Wilson above, you may need to find an employer willing to take a chance on you or you might have to search for an employer that prefers CPC-A candidates so they can train from scratch using their own unique system. Either way, you need to give yourself the best advantage to get hired.

Does Removing the CPC-A Apprenticeship Status Help Me?

Some newly credentialed coders feel you need to remove the apprentice status right away. Removing the status is helpful, but it still does not make you experienced. Most employers do not count AAPC Practicode as experience, unfortunately, and simply see it as educational material. If you wish to remove the CPC-A, there are options available such as internships. CCO has an intern program that is free to help remove A's. More information can be [found here](#). The AAPC explains CPC-A removal requirements [here](#).

<u>Warning</u>: We recommend avoiding paid Internships. If you ultimately decide to end that paid internship early, you could be out hundreds or even thousands of dollars and still be in the

same situation as before with no documented experience in the field.

Do Multiple Credentials Increase My Chance of Employment?

Many newly credentialed coders also feel a specialty credential or other credentials can help them get hired faster. Unfortunately, that too can also still depend on the potential employer since you still have no actual experience to back up your credentials. Most employers will immediately pick up on that fact. Having multiple credentials may open more doors of opportunity, but it is not a guarantee you will get hired over other applicants. More credentials, however, do help you become a better coder and shows your dedication to the career field.

What about Externships?

[Externships](#) seem to be a good way to get some experience and to build confidence.

'Externships are helpful in developing the student's confidence – more than the coding skills," Wilson says."The coding skills will sharpen with repeated practice once the student becomes employed as a coder. Externships also provide exposure to various medical-specialty coding opportunities and are most advantageous to the candidate."

Melinda Kollin, Coding Manager at **Anesthesia Business Consultants,** headquartered in Jackson, MI says that an externship helps tremendously because it "helps us to know what areas to concentrate on with them as our goal is for them to succeed."

Alisha Ableson, Healthcare Recruiter, **Harper Associates** in Farmington Hills, MI, reports that while an externship helps, its agency does not count that towards actual work experience.

"Normally, we require two years of "on-the-job experience" to be considered for a position," she says.

Carrie Young, BS, CPC, Manager, Coding Unit, **Springfield Clinic**, Springfield, IL agrees that externships are helpful too.

"It's certainly better than no experience at all," she says.

What If You Have No Field Experience?

Do not fear. Employers say that experience is not the most important factor.

In fact, Wilson says that she would hire and has hired certified coders who had absolutely no prior coding experience.

"Newly-certified professionals are generally eager to learn and have no preconditioning or bad habits that come with experience," she says. "While it is necessary to plan for training and less productivity, new coders tend not to disappoint. They are detail-oriented and often research resource articles more often than experienced coders do. Therefore, they typically familiarize themselves with the most current codes and guidelines during this steep learning curve."

Words of Wisdom for Applying

So, what advice would these employers give to a medical coder who is applying for a job at their company/practice?

Wilson says: "I would let him/her know that accuracy means more to me than speed, especially when he/she is first learning. I would suggest that the coder identify his/her areas of weakness and then start doing some coding exercises to improve on those deficiencies. I highly recommend reading the "Official ICD-10-CM Guidelines for Coding and Reporting" and to also get familiar with the AMA's CPT guidelines for each of the six sections. Access to "CPT Assistant" is also beneficial, but the basic guidelines should be read and re-read periodically, by newcomers and experienced coders alike.

Kollin says: Pay attention to detail. Open yourself up to constructive criticism. Absorb as much as possible by taking notes, making copies and creating a book of examples. Ask as many questions as needed and communicate with your department. The coding world changes constantly so know your profession.

Young says: Dress for success, sit up straight, and look your interviewer in the eye. Be honest about what you are searching for within a coding position because you and your

potential employer want the right fit for a cheerful and productive work environment.

At the end of the day, employers want experience because an experienced coder can bring in significant amounts of unrealized revenue to a provider. An inexperienced coder can cause revenue delays and possible fraud issues that can lead to damaging consequences which neither employer nor employee want. If you can successfully communicate or document your ability to code accurately, more employers will be ready to hire you.

Job Search Basics

The first thing you need to do is begin with the things that can assist you in your job search.

Start with creating your own employment brand for a coder. You want to create something that represents your objective based on your professional accomplishments and skillset to a potential employer. Making connections and networking and having a current relevant resume is a good way to start. As a newly certified coder you want to cause something to happen to get yourself noticed to get an interview and ultimately a job.

As a newly credentialed coder you will not have any relevant on-the-job experience which many employers require along with your certification, so you need to find ways to get yourself noticed to be given an opportunity despite this.

LinkedIn:

- Start with the #1 networking place for professionals -LinkedIn.
- Set up a LinkedIn coder profile if you do not yet have one.
- Use a professional photo and cover for your coder profile, something that says I am a professional.
- Use your real name followed by your certification.
- Use a professional email.
- Make a complete profile with relevant current content.
- Show recruiters you are open for work on your profile.
- Complete all sections about, experience, education, certifications, skills, endorsements, accomplishments, interests.
- Start connecting with people you know & people you want to know including recruiters.
- Have your connections endorse your skills.
- Join and follow groups and people in the medical coding field.

- Be active with likes, comments and sharing to get noticed.
- Upload a current resume. Consider using someone like Project Resume who works specifically with medical coders if you want a professionally prepared resume. (https://www.projectresume.net/ 5% off discount code CCO_05)
- Don't be scared to research other ways to utilize LinkedIn for job searches and profile optimization. Here's a good starting point. At the end of the job search journey, you should have a pretty active and well rounded LinkedIn profile.

Networking:

Join your local AAPC Chapter to network with coders in your area as these coders know where jobs are and can recommend you.

Join Facebook to join coding groups to network and connect with many coders and potential employers and recruiters from all over the USA to broaden your job search.

Other ways to network and possibly get noticed after certification as a possible new hire is volunteering to be an AAPC chapter officer, help proctor AAPC exams or mentor other AAPC coders preparing for certification.

Immerse yourself in coding institutions such as AAPC, AHIMA & other coding resources like CCO's Community for coders and other social media areas like Facebook coding groups by participating to show your coding knowledge and always remember to be professional as you never know who is watching.

Cultivate a relationship with recruiters, companies, employment agencies, HR professionals and other coders.

Job Search Keywords:

Keywords rule the internet and almost all websites that have a search function. "Keywords" are the words you use to find topics of interest. In the case of medical coding, here are common keywords that can reveal even more jobs:

AAPC	Anatomy	CMS
AHIMA	Clinic	Coding Clinic

Compliance	HCPCS	Medical Records
CPC	HIPAA	Medical Terminology
CPT	Hospital	Medicare
Data entry	ICD-10	Outpatient
Denials	Inpatient	Surgery
Entry level	Medical Coding	
EPIC	Mental Health	

Possible "Foot In The Door" Job Titles

There are many job titles that require the use of coding knowledge.
Here are some examples of "foot in the door" job titles a coder can start applying for as many of these jobs include doing tasks like verifying codes, charge entry, payment posting, insurance collections, denials etc. All of which can potentially lead to your first coding job opportunity.

- A/R Biller
- Account Receivable Representative
- Account Receivable Specialist
- Admissions Representative
- Appeals Specialist
- Biller
- Billing Coordinator
- Billing Data Entry Operator
- Billing Representative
- Billing Technician
- Charge Entry Specialist
- Charge Master
- Chargemaster Analyst
- Chart Processor
- Claims Processor
- Clinic Manager
- Clinical Documentation Specialist
- Coder
- Coding Educator
- Coding Instructor
- Coding Technician
- Collections Representative
- Collector
- Compliance Coder
- Compliance Data Analyst
- Customer Account Representative
- Customer Service Representative

- Customer Service Resolution Associate
- Denials Specialist
- Dental Tracker
- Documentation Imaging Technician
- DRG Coder
- DRG Coordinator
- Eligibility Advocate
- Entry Level Billing
- Entry Level Coding
- Facility Coder
- Front Office Coordinator
- Front Office Assistant
- Front Office Representative
- Clinic Health Information Coder
- Health Information Technician
- Health Insurance Specialist
- Health Services Representative
- HCC coder
- Insurance Authorizations
- Insurance Biller
- Insurance Coordinator
- Insurance Representative
- Insurance Verification
- Intake Coordinator
- Medical Billing Specialist
- Medical Insurance Claims Specialist
- Medical Office Billing
- Administrative Assistant
- Medical Records Clerk
- Medical Records Coder
- Medical Records Support Services Assistant
- Medical scribe
- Medicare Insurance Follow-Up Representative
- Medicare Representative
- Member Relationship Specialist
- Office Administrator
- Office Manager
- Outpatient Coder
- Patient Financial Representative
- Patient Financial Service Representative
- Payment Review Representative
- Physician Billing Representative
- Physician Coder Physician Coding
- Compliance Specialist
- Physician Documentation Specialist
- Pre-certification Representative
- Prepayment Review Representative
- Pro-Fee Coder
- Provider Services
- Call Center Representative
- Registrar
- Release of Information Specialist
- Revenue Integrity Analyst
- Reimbursement Coding Specialist
- Account Billing Specialist
- Risk adjustment coder
- Scheduler
- Scheduling Coordinator
- Self-Pay Medical Collector
- Senior Patient Services Representative
- Surgical Coder

- Suspended Billing Representative
- Technical Support Analyst

Potential Employer Websites

The employers listed are just some examples of popular companies that have been known to have employment opportunities for coders ranging from entry level to many years of experience with some jobs being remote and some only available in various states or local areas for coders with no experience to a few years of experience.

Advent Health https://jobs.adventhealth.com/join

Ajilion https://www.ajilon.com/jobs/resume-submission/

AMN Healthcare https://www.amnhealthcare.com/careers/revenue-cycle/

Aviacode https://www.aviacode.com/careers/

Ascension https://ascensionjobs2-ascension.icims.com/jobs/

Change Healthcare https://careers.changehealthcare.com/opportunities

CHRISTUS Health https://careers.christushealth.org/career-opportunities/coding-medical/#|||||1|1|0

Ciox Health https://www.cioxhealth.com/about-us/people-culture/careers/

Clinics (Search your local area)

Conifer Health Solutions https://www.coniferhealth.com/careers

CorroHealth https://careers.corrohealth.com/

Doctor/Physician Offices (Search your local area)

Franciscan Health https://jobs.franciscanhealth.org/job/

Guidehouse https://guidehouse.com/careers

HIA- Health Information Alliance http://career.hia-corp.com/

Himagine Solutions https://himaginesolutions.com/candidates/careers/

Hospitals (Search your local area)

Humana https://careers.humana.com/job-search-results/

IMedX https://imedx.com/careers/

Inovalon https://www.inovalon.com/careers/openings/

Insight Global https://jobs.insightglobal.com/

Kaiser Permanente https://www.kaiserpermanentejobs.org/

Maxim Healthcare Information Services

https://www.maximhealthcare.com/careers

MediRevv https://www.medirevv.com/careers

NThrive https://www.nthrive.com/careers/

Optum/United Health group https://careers.unitedhealthgroup.com/

OS2 Healthcare Solutions https://os2u.org/apprenticeship/

Specialty medical clinics (Search your local area)

Temp Agencies (Search your local area)

The Coding Network https://codingnetwork.com/jobs-with-the-coding-network/

UNC Health https://jobs.unchealthcare.org/search/jobs

University of Michigan https://careers.umich.edu/search/

University of Colorado Medicine (See Lensa Apprenticeship below)

https://www.cumedicine.us/about-cu-medicine/employment-opportunities

VillageMD (Apprentice program coming soon) https://www.villagemd.com/open-positions

Vituity https://www.vituity.com/careers/medical-billing-jobs/

Job Databases:

Tip: Using free software like LastPass or Bitwarden to save the same username and passwords for job search websites may save you frustration so you are not having to remember many different logins.

Here are some popular databases for job searching: (Not an all inclusive list)

AAPC https://www.aapc.com/medical-coding-jobs/

Facebook https://www.facebook.com/jobs

Glassdoor https://www.glassdoor.com/Job/remote-medical-coder-jobs-SRCH_KO0,20.htm

Indeed https://www.indeed.com/q-Medical-Coder-jobs.html

JFAMC https://jfamc.org/category/coding/

Lensa https://lensa.com/ (Apprenticeship)

LinkedIn https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/medical-coding-jobs/

Simply Hired https://www.simplyhired.com/search?q=medical+coder

Smart Recruiters https://jobs.smartrecruiters.com/

Unemployment (Search your state)

Zip recruiter https://www.ziprecruiter.com/Jobs/Remote-Medical-Coder

Hiring Considerations

Your knowledge and experience in these examples can be beneficial for a coder to know and utilize. A simple Google search will give you more information on each topic as it relates to coders.

Appeals	HEIDIS
Authoritative references	HIPAA
CMS.gov /MedLearn Policies / Medicare	LCD's/NCD's
Coding Compliance	MIPS
Coding Guidelines	MUE's
Denial Edits	NCCI Edits
EHR/EMR/MR	OIG
EPIC	Payor Policies
ERISA	SNOMED

Specialty Associations

- A potential employer may want to know how long you have stayed at previous jobs because most coding managers do not have the time or inclination to train and retrain new hires repeatedly so be prepared to explain any gaps or short-term employment you have had.
- Do not limit yourself to only a remote job on your resume as this may likely eliminate you altogether from being considered for a job that could eventually become remote in some cases as an employer may want to start you with training on site.
- Be aware of what the public can see of your social media presence as potential employers do sometimes look at these for many reasons like what professional groups you may be in and your behavior there if it was positive or negative.
- Experience is golden in this field so any way you can get some whether it be an internship, or a temporary assignment is always helpful.
- HIPAA can be a roadblock to an easy internship in some cases depending on how a coder is working with the code sets and if confidential patient records are involved in training.
- Other opportunities you may want to consider may include Risk adjustment/HCC or even billing opportunities.

How to Write an Eye-Catching Resume

A resume is a snapshot of your professional career and a well written medical coder resume can quickly lead to that first foot in the door. So, it's important to make a good first impression.

Employer Resume Writing Tips

Liz Wilson, CCS, RHIT, CEMC, CPMA, Director of Coding and Auditing, Compliance Officer at **Healthcare Solutions of WNY**, Cheektowaga, NY, says that she tends to look for detailed descriptions of job duties and work experience.

"I also take volunteer work/internships/externships into consideration when assessing the candidate's enthusiasm and ambition (at least on paper)," she says. "Key words have become catch-phrases and in my experience, don't always seem to reflect the true assets of the interviewee. I look for more original words to describe the candidate's background and professional aspirations."

For example, to describe your personal attributes, words such as: energetic, enthusiastic, courteous and helpful are all good. These are all character traits that roll over well into a job position. They also tell a little more about you than simply using a phrase like "team player."

Use specific adjectives whenever you can. For example, rather than writing "professional," try working in words like: punctual, versatile, motivated, industrious and problem solver. These words are much more likely to capture the employer's attention.

Melinda Kollin, Coding Manager at **Anesthesia Business Consultants,** headquartered in Jackson, MI, says that she scans resumes for coding experience.

Some buzz words or acronyms that I look for are: CPC, HCPCS and ICD-10. I want to see what they know about medical coding. I look for the nuts and bolts. I also look at their objective as there are some who love to code, and there others who want more (i.e., moving into a managerial or administrative-type role.)

For Alisha Ableson, Healthcare Recruiter, **Harper Associates** in Farmington Hills, MI, she says that she reviews resumes to ensure that they match her clients' requests.

"Typically, we are searching for medical coders who are specific in one area such as ER, ICU or surgical coding. So, I focus on resumes that have detailed information about specific experience. I also review resumes for credentials. Some clients may seek a CPC, while others are willing to accept a CPC-A."

Carrie Young, BS, CPC, Manager, Coding Unit, **Springfield Clinic**, Springfield, IL typically focuses on education and prefers someone with AAPC certification.

All employers agree that is important to list any associations where you may be a member. For example, if you are a member of an AAPC or AHIMA chapter, note this on your resume. Employers want to know that you have enough interest in the job to be involved in outside professional and networking activities. Additionally, if you volunteer at a hospital, note that as well.

Also, if you do not have a great deal of work experience, it's okay to list part-time, summer jobs or volunteer experiences. Just try to make the descriptions relevant to the job you are applying for. For example, if you worked as a cashier for a summer, indicate that you are

number oriented and pay close attention to details.

Keep Your Resume Simple

The bottom line is to keep the information clear and concise. Employers also agree that typos are a turn off. Do not rely on spell check. Ask a friend to read it over as well. And, make sure to use a business-style font that is easy to read such as 10 or 12 point Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri. Fancy fonts take away from what you want the employer to really focus on – you.

Also, do not over format. Too many **bolded** or <u>underlined</u> areas can be confusing. The simpler the format, the better and try not to exceed one page. Indicate at the bottom of the page that references can be furnished upon request.

There are many samples of medical coding resumes that you can find online. Although we include a sample near the end of this report, a quick Google search of "[medical coding resume](#)" will turn up a host of additional choices. [Indeed.com](#) also has some good resources. Just remember, you want your resume to highlight your skills, accomplishments and experiences. Employers want to know how your knowledge and experience will add to their organization.

Here are some more resume writing tips in no particular order…

- Make sure you use a professional font.
- Proofread for grammatical errors.
- Make sure your personal information is easily seen and displayed correctly, especially your name, email, and phone number.
- State your objective which can be considered your personal mission statement for your employment goal which should be simple and clearly stated.
- Use content that sells you by using active verbs to describe and highlight your relevant skills and accomplishments that relate to the job you are applying for.
- It is all about you, not your past jobs but how you performed and what you accomplished on those jobs.
- Pay attention to details.

Tips for Writing a Strong Cover Letter

The main goal of a cover letter is to get the hiring manager's attention and to ultimately get you called in for an interview. So, in order to help you get started in your medical coding career, we went out into the field and asked employers what gets their attention and also sought the advice of a healthcare recruiter. It's all about putting your best foot forward.

What do employers want?

Liz Wilson, CCS, RHIT, CEMC, CPMA, Director of Coding and Auditing, Compliance Officer at **Healthcare Solutions of WNY**, Cheektowaga, NY says that she looks for a polite and personal introduction.

"I want to know something about the candidate right away," she says. "The cover letter should convince me why I should take the time to interview this candidate. A brief summary of accomplishments and goals is a good way to catch an interviewer's eye and to help the interviewer decide if the candidate's interest coincides with the position or responsibilities of the job."

Anesthesia Business Consultants is headquartered in Jackson, MI. Melinda Kollin, Coding Manager, emphasizes that, "The cover letter should be well organized and professional."

"I also like the person to briefly describe themselves and to tell me their goals," she says. "It's important to understand where the person is coming from and where they want to go."

Other employers want to know that you have done your research about them.

Carrie Young, BS, CPC, Manager, Coding Unit, Springfield Clinic, Springfield, IL, says, "I want to know why the individual has chosen to apply at my company."

This demonstrates that the candidate is not blindly sending out cover letters and resumes and hoping that something sticks.

"It shows that they are committed to working with you," Young says.

What do the recruiters say?
The recruiters at Med-Scribe Healthcare Recruiters, Fairport, NY offer the following on advice on writing a cover letter:

- Customize the cover letter. Each position you apply for should include a customized cover letter that specifically demonstrates to the hiring manager how and why you are a great fit for the position.
- Keep your cover letter short. Limit it to no more than one page.
- Be professional. Humor works in some situations, but this is not the best place to showcase your funny bone. It often falls flat on paper. Stay business-like.
- Sell, sell, sell: Your goal is to sell you. Never even hint that you may be under qualified (even if you think you might be).
- Be consistent: Don't mention work experience in your cover letter that you don't have on your resume.
- Proof, proof, proof: Ask a friend to check your letter for typos. Do not rely on spell check. In today's tight job market, even one small error may mean that your cover letter ends up in the trash bin.
- Be specific. Name the position you are applying for in the first paragraph. And, don't ever write, "I'll take anything that's available." If you're unqualified for the position, but otherwise impress a hiring manager, she/he may consider you for other openings; but never say so in your cover letter.
- Research the company. Make sure to state why you want to work for this company in this position. You could say something like, "because your hospital is considered to be one of the best in the country, I feel strongly that I should position my future with a healthcare leader."
- Demonstrate problem solving skills: In your second paragraph, state how your skills and experience will help your employer to solve their problems in the position for which you are applying. Companies want to hire people who can solve problems. For example, state how you can solve your coding manager's problems by processing X number of healthcare records per day. Again, be specific – think numbers and percentages.
- Follow-up: End your letter with a promise to follow up with the hiring manager in two or three days by e-mail or phone. Never end with, "I hope you'll call me." Remember, be business-like.

Sample Cover Letter

January 1, 2022

Ms. Jane Smith
HR Manager
Family Health Practice
123 Main Street
Anywhere, NY 12345

Dear Ms. Smith,

I was very excited to come across your recent posting for a medical coder on your practice's website. I have been waiting for an opportunity with your practice because of its excellent reputation among local patients.

My experience and proficiency in ICD-10, CPT, HCPCS and DRG standards and techniques is comprehensive.

My understanding of medical terminology is an asset that helps me on the job because it allows me to communicate intelligently with all parties involved.

I recently obtained my CPC credential. As a result of my hands on experience obtained through my internship, my certification and strong desire to grow and learn, I am confident that I am a great candidate for the medical coder position you have posted.

Enclosed you will find my resume highlighting what I have to offer to the Family Health Practice. I look forward to the prospect of working as a medical coder for your practice.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Signature)
Mary Jones, CPC

Enc. Resume

Sample Resume

Mary Jones, CPC
123 Main Street, New York, NY 12345
Contact #; E-mail Address

_____

OBJECTIVE: I am a dependable and detail-oriented professional who thrives in a fast-paced environment.
I am seeking to integrate my knowledge and desire to learn more and grow within your company while providing excellent service to both internal and external customers.

CORE COMPETENCIES: Medical terminology; ICD-10-CM, CPT, and HCPCS coding; contract interpretation, solid understanding of Medicare and Medicaid guidelines, insurance verification/collections authorizations, HCFA 1500 and HIPAA guidelines.

QUALIFICATIONS:
- CPC certified.
- New hire training on procedures, standards and resources.
- Developed and implemented new procedures and systems.
- Implement problem-solving initiatives and resolutions.
- Strong, self-management skills.
- Office management support and administrative initiatives.

WORK HISTORY:
January 2012 – Present: Community Health Center
Medical Coding Internship
- Assist medical coders within the department
- Observe the various coding procedures.
- Submit claims
- Process denials and move them to next stage

July 2004 – December 2011: ABC Construction
Administrative Assistant
- Full Administrative Duties
- Complete contracts and bids.
- Train and supervise clerical staff.
- Organize meetings,
- Arrange travel
- Manage records
- Audit monthly expenses.

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS:
John Jay High School, 2014
NYC Career Institute: Honors diploma – Medical Coding, 2020
Received CPC in 2022
 AAPC member

What to Expect During the Interview

It's go time! You've written the cover letter, resume and now you've gotten a call to come in for an interview. You're almost there.

Get the Inside Scoop

To make it a little easier for you, we talked with a few employers to find out what types of questions they typically ask when interviewing for a medical coder position. Here's what they had to say.

Liz Wilson, CCS, RHIT, CEMC, CPMA, Director of Coding and Auditing, Compliance Officer at **Healthcare Solutions of WNY**, Cheektowaga, NY, says that she tends to ask open-ended questions in order to assess the candidate's initiative to research and to work independently.

Open-ended interview questions have no right or wrong answers. In-depth responses are expected, along with a description or explanation. Here are some examples of open-ended interview questions and suggested answers:

- Tell me about yourself. The best way to answer this is to tell the employer how you are today; it should not be a recap of your resume.
- What is your greatest strength? How will this help you to perform the job? This is a great opportunity for you to connect your qualifications to the job being offered. Have some achievement stories ready in case the employer asks for examples.
- What is your greatest weakness? There are a few ways to answer this. You might wish to focus on a skill that is not really related to the job. For example, "I am not great at speaking in public, but I will do it if I have to." You may also turn a negative into a positive. For example, "Organization was never my best trait, but in a previous job I

implemented a time-management system that really helped with this."
- How do you handle stress and pressure? Some good replies include: "I react to situations, rather than stress so the stress does not get the best of me;" "I deal with stress by exercising after work so it does not get out of control;" or I'm not a person who has a difficult time with stress. When under pressure, I focus and get the job done."
- What motivates you? The employer is trying to get sense of why you are a good fit. This is a very personal answer, but some good answers to consider and make your own are: "I have always been motivated to do a good job;" or, "I enjoy succeeding and seeing those around me succeed as well."
- What are you passionate about? Take this time to talk about something more personal so the employer can get to know you a bit more. For example, "I volunteer with my church and am passionate about helping others; or "I am an avid painter, and enjoy taking painting classes on the weekend."
- Why are you the best person for the job? One suggestion is to tell them that you CARE. Several motivational speakers use this term. It stands for "commitment, awareness, responsiveness and exceeding expectations."

"I also ask non-leading questions so I can get a better feel for the candidate's views on meeting deadlines and on following a chain-of-command," she adds. "I will ask questions that are directed at problem-solving when it comes to difficult situations regarding providers or colleagues."

For example, some questions may include:
- What would you do if you received a rejected claim?
- What do you consider to be one of the most important skills for this job?
- Wilson also tries to assess and evaluate the candidate's readiness to use tools needed by coders. She asks candidates if they know what an encoder, LCD or NCD are; and what NCCI edits are.

"I will also inquire as to whether he/she has ever used spreadsheets, or is comfortable with e-mail communication," Wilson says. "These questions typically help me to get a better picture regarding how independent he or she will be after hire."

Melinda Kollin, Coding Manager at **Anesthesia Business Consultants**, headquartered in Jackson, MI says that she typically asks the following questions:
- What are your short-term goals?
- What are your long-term goals?
- How are you with working independently versus working with others?
- What do you do to be organized, detail-oriented, double check your work, etc.?

Alisha Ableson, Healthcare Recruiter, **Harper Associates** in Farmington Hills, MI says that she focuses on the nuts and bolts of the position. She asks:
- What specialties have you coded for?
- How long have you been coding?
- What is your accuracy rate?
- Are you a CPC with AAPC credentials?

"I mostly want to know about specialties, amount of experience, credentialing and schooling," she says.

Carrie Young, BS, CPC, Manager, Coding Unit, **Springfield Clinic**, Springfield, IL likes to focus on quality and production-focused questions.
"It's helpful if the applicant has previous work experience that had quality and production benchmarks (i.e., banking, insurance processor)," she says.
Finally, be yourself. Dress professionally and know that they need you as much as you need them. Confidence is the key.

Other Potential Interview Questions

- Do you have a thorough understanding of medical terminology and anatomy?
- What is a principal diagnosis?
- What is a modifier?
- What is a DRG?
- What is an open reduction?
- What medical forms are you familiar with?
- What types of software are you familiar with?
- How do you keep current with insurance and healthcare coverage changes?
- What are the types of repairs?

Tips for Acing Your Interview

The job interview. This is your biggest opportunity to sell yourself as the best candidate for the job and become a name they will remember when considering which candidate to extend the position to or positions in the future they may have open you still may be in the running for.

- Know how to get to the interview site ahead of time. Use Google Maps to [estimate the drive time the next day](#) before so you leave with enough time to arrive.
- Arrive on time. If possible, arrive 20 minutes early to compose yourself and watch the employees going in and out. You can tell a lot about a company by the way people conduct themselves outside.
- Ask questions to show interest in the job and company. Do your homework and know a bit about their history and culture.
- Be confident. Not arrogant! Just confidence in yourself and your abilities.
- Be honest. Any embellishment of skills you do not possess will only endanger your employment and can possibly hurt the career brand you are trying to establish.
- Be polite. Don't talk over the interviewer and avoid risky topics like religion, politics or family life.
- Don't be afraid to talk about yourself but keep it professional.
- Dress for success.
- Express your interest in learning things as a challenge and a way to better yourself on the job.
- Express why you would be a good candidate for hire.
- Explain how you can code accurately and highlight your ability to quickly learn.
- Have a good attitude.
- Keep eye contact.
- Use appropriate language to clearly communicate.

Pre-employment Exam Question Examples:

Some employers might ask you to complete a pre-employment exam to gauge your knowledge and coding competence. Pre employment exams should not be feared or delayed as that could make you look unprepared or not eager to work perhaps so timely completion is a must if you receive one.

Here are some examples of questions or situations they might ask you to code:

- Choose the correct level of service based on documentation provided?
- Circle the correct definition of critical care?
- Is there an ICD-10-CM guideline for HIV?
- Circle examples of a correctly documented chief complaint.
- Circle the correct documentation for a 99214 if you are doing time-based coding.
- Which is the diagnosis, and which is a symptom in this example?
- Code an operative report or several operative reports.

After the Interview

After the interview send a brief email expressing thanks for their consideration showing that even if you do not get this job, you still would like to be considered for future job openings.
Be patient! Your chance will come but a little help never hurts.
Good Luck!

Please Note: All examples are not all-inclusive lists.

CCO Resources

Medical Terminology & Anatomy for Medical Coders

Medical Terminology and Anatomy for ICD-10 Coding helps you prepare to code accurately and effectively using the ICD-10-CM/PCS code set with a complete understanding of relevant medical terminology and anatomy.

We help make unfamiliar medical language more approachable, and carefully sequenced medical terminology lessons help you understand the vastly increased anatomy necessary for accurate coding, including the locations of hundreds of arteries, muscles, nerves, and other anatomy. . **[Learn More...]**

Physician Based Medical Coding Course

Our Physician Based Medical Coding course will teach you the core concepts needed for coding in a medical office and gives you all the training needed to pass the AAPC CPC® board exam and start you in your career in Medical Coding. Our goal is to give you all the current information needed to be a successful medical coder AND pass your medical coding CPC® exam test. This includes training in CPT, HCPCS and ICD-10-CM.

When you are complete with our course, you will be able to review and assign the correct procedures and billing codes for physician based patient services. Since 1999, we have been teaching medical coding – with many students successfully passing their first CPC® exam after viewing my videos. **[Learn More...]**

CPC Review Blitz Videos

So you have completed your medical coding training. You have big plans to make a career in the medical coding field. Smart move! Your next step is to take either the Certified Professional Coder (CPC®) exam or the Certified Coding Specialist-Physician Based (CCS-P) exam.

This is both a review of the subject matter and a guide to doing well on the exam. You will not only have an exhaustive review of all the various diagnostic and therapeutic procedures covered on the exam, the program will also demonstrate ways to go through the process of taking the exam in the most efficient manner, making best use of the time

allowed. Since this is an open-book exam, the program teaches you my proprietary "bubbling and highlighting technique." This technique demonstrates how to mark and highlight your coding manual to make it easier to choose the correct answer of the choices given for any question on the exam. You'll see how to best manage some questions you might find more difficult than others. **[Learn More]**

CPC® Practice Exam

Our 150 question CPC® practice exam was created to emulate the actual CPC® exam as closely as possible. We felt that by doing this examinees would know exactly what to expect on examination day. By utilizing this structure examinees can better prepare for the exam by focusing on category specific questions and identifying areas of weakness. Knowing what to expect in detail also tend to help calm pre-test anxiety.

We have taken into account the wide spectrum of diversity the CPC® exam offers and have constructed the questions on our CPC® Practice Exam to reflect those on the actual exam as closely as possible.

In addition to our well constructed questions we are also providing a **full rationale** for each question.

These rationales provide the correct answer for each question as well as a full explanation as of why this option is correct, why the other three options are incorrect, and where in the medical coding books the answer can be located. **[Learn More]**

CCO Club

Every month CCO presents webinar events that answer questions from you and your peers. When you join the club you get **first access to the replay of the live event** including a **printable transcript** containing every word spoken during the webinar. The transcripts also include time stamps of where each question starts to help you advance the video to just the right spot. The CCO Club also includes Coding Help, CEUs and while you're an active member, you can extend access to any Course or Review Blitz you've purchased from us in the past. **[Learn More]**

We hope we have helped answer your questions about getting your first job in Medical Coding. We would love to help you with any additional questions you may have. Just drop by our friendly **Community** or register to attend our **free webinars**.