

8.21.14 - Medical Assisting Breakout

Present: Rhonda Sykes (GUHSD), David Sullivan (Metro Rural), Brian Browne (Banner), Dina Chavez (West-MEC) and Stephen Weltsch (West-MEC)

Curriculum

No comments. Advisory members are reviewing standards and instructional resource list.

Staffing Needs

Advisory members did not see an immediate need to bring-on a PA, NP, DO or MD. There was considerable discussion of clinic based experiences, such as community health & wellness screenings and sports physicals (immunization too). In these cases medical professionals often volunteer to publicize their practice. David, through Rural Metro, offers annual free blood pressure readings at the AZ State Capitol (House vs. Senate). Rhonda participates in 9th grade vision and hearing screenings. The members encouraged Dina to partner with local schools to complete similar screenings. The vision screening does not require certification, but hearing does. Rhonda shared certification information for hearing screenings.

There was reinforced acknowledgment that medical assistants cannot diagnose. Rhonda shared phrases she teaches students regarding this.

There were staffing recommendations made in conjunction with establishing externship sites. If the program will offer CMA certificates, students will need to be placed in externships for 160 hours.

There was a recommendation to partner with Midwestern.

Equipment

No recommendations at this time. Advisory was impressed with facilities and equipment.

MA/Phlebotomy Certification

Students can work in AZ without the national certification; however, this is a site-based decision. Some employers may still require it. Council members would encourage the West-MEC MA program to connect students with the CMA certification. This requires 160 hour externship of students. Some externship sites may require students be 18 years old; this is also a site-based, employer decision. Advisory recommended the program embed 160 hours of externship either second semester of the second-year or the summer after HS graduation. While not required, Banner tends to hire more candidates with CMA over not.

The more related certificates students can earn through the program, the more marketable they will be upon completion. Consider providing student the opportunity to earn CMA, EKG and Phlebotomy.

MA Software

As a result of the Affordable Care Act, Banner is investing in a new EMR system. Dina will stay in contact with Brian regarding this critical software selection. Banner system is the largest single employer of Medical Assistants and if we can align EMR systems, students will benefit.

Guest Speakers

Advisory members strongly encouraged guest speakers. Brian stated it was vital to have speakers speak on research and innovation within the industry. David offered an ER doctor as a guest speaker.

Job Outlook

The implementation of the Affordable Care Act is driving patient care to outpatient facilities, urgent care and primary care physicians. The result is a strong demand in the MA field.

Future Programs

Advisory members encouraged West-MEC to consider programs in Physical Therapy Assistants and Respiratory Therapy Techs. Again, the Affordable Care Act has expanded career opportunities for individuals with these certifications.