

“The Art of ICD-9 Coding for Home Health”

Okay, maybe it wasn't as much fun as the twelve days of Christmas but we did have fun. And that's not easy to do these days with all the chaos in the coding world, not to mention everything else that's going on in home health. Of course I'm referring to the series of "The Art of ICD-9 Coding Workshops" which CAHSAH sponsored in both Ontario and Sacramento. What did you miss?

On the first day we covered the very basics of coding. Since it's important to understand why we should pursue coding accuracy, our first agenda item discussed where all those numbers go once we have assigned them on our various documents. Diagnostic coding can impact our reimbursement, risk adjustment, and case mix profile as well as help support the medical necessity of the disciplines and interventions we have requested on our plans of care. They can even influence future healthcare decisions. We spent time discussing the characteristics and challenges of home health coding. Yes indeed, we are a special bunch and have our own unique way of doing things. It's one thing to listen to all this stuff and another thing to actually apply the knowledge. Coding guidelines (both general and chapter-specific) were the next topic. These are the rules of coding that must be followed no matter which setting coders work in. Scenarios included therapy issues, diabetes, fractures, CVAs, symptoms, late effects as well as how and when to use V and E codes. There were lots of discussion and clarifying questions were readily addressed.

On the second day we spent more time discussing coding trends and what happens when we do or don't follow coding etiquette. Topics included how to code post-op patients, routine care, home health procedures, wounds and ulcers. We discussed when to use complication codes versus late effect codes, how to code strokes, complex issues related to diabetes and other manifestation codes, special considerations related to the use of combination codes, and points to consider when coding cancer patients. Of course all these good discussions ended in case studies so you could practice your newfound knowledge.

"But what about Attachment D", you ask? This, of course, is the latest in CMS' guidance for home health coders. And while it's introduced in day one, explored more in day 2, it's further discussed and analyzed in day 3. On this day we spent the bulk of our time discussing all the other source documents that influence our coding choices while never sacrificing coding. This class revealed what these other official documents are, how to find the latest versions of each and how to analyze and integrate this information into your current coding practice. We examined risk adjustment and how coding impacts it as well as the many ways that coding can contribute to reimbursement. We even used the Grouper Logic Tables to calculate points towards reimbursement in ever-more-difficult coding situations. We talked about the various and seemingly contradictory guidance from CMS regarding the completion of M0246.

Ontario Evaluation Scores **July 28-30, 2009**

| | <u>Day 1</u> | <u>Day 2</u> | <u>Day 3</u> |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| How would you rate this session overall? | 4.62 | 4.56 | 4.71 |
| How well did this session meet the course objectives? | 4.64 | 4.56 | 4.73 |
| How well did this session meet your personal objectives? | 4.59 | 4.44 | 4.71 |

SPARKLE SPARKS

| | <u>Day 1</u> | <u>Day 2</u> | <u>Day 3</u> |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Knowledge of Topic | 4.81 | 4.81 | 4.92 |
| Communication Skills | 4.79 | 4.79 | 4.86 |
| Usefulness of Handouts | 4.76 | 4.73 | 4.82 |
| Effectiveness of Visual Aids | 4.67 | 4.68 | 4.67 |
| Adequate Opportunity for Audience Participation | 4.69 | 4.73 | 4.80 |
| Value to your Professional Development | 4.67 | 4.75 | 4.82 |
| Overall Quality of Presentation | 4.69 | 4.77 | 4.86 |

Sacramento Evaluation Scores **August 4-6, 2009**

| | <u>Day 1</u> | <u>Day 2</u> | <u>Day 3</u> |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| How would you rate this session overall? | 4.74 | 4.89 | 4.76 |
| How well did this session meet the course objectives? | 4.85 | 4.93 | 4.80 |
| How well did this session meet your personal objectives? | 4.74 | 4.89 | 4.70 |

SPARKLE SPARKS

| | <u>Day 1</u> | <u>Day 2</u> | <u>Day 3</u> |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Knowledge of Topic | 4.97 | 4.98 | 4.91 |
| Communication Skills | 4.95 | 5.00 | 4.91 |
| Usefulness of Handouts | 5.00 | 4.95 | 4.89 |
| Effectiveness of Visual Aids | 4.92 | 4.93 | 4.89 |
| Adequate Opportunity for Audience Participation | 4.82 | 4.89 | 4.80 |
| Value to your Professional Development | 4.95 | 4.95 | 4.80 |
| Overall Quality of Presentation | 4.87 | 4.98 | 4.91 |

Testimonials

We had an outstanding presentation. Sparkle Sparks is a very good-natured, upbeat, informative, serious and ethical presenter. She organizes the training superbly. – Sacramento, CA

This class was very informative, I highly recommend it, and it's very helpful. – Ontario, CA