

STATE OF WISCONSIN  
CLASSIFICATION SPECIFICATION

CODING TECHNICIAN  
CLASSIFICATION SERIES

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of This Classification Specification

This classification specification is the basic authority under ER 2.04, Wis. Adm. Code, for making classification decisions relative to present and future positions which for a majority of the time perform medical coding. This classification specification is not intended to identify every duty which may be assigned to positions, but is intended to serve as a framework for classification decision making in this occupational area. Classification decisions must be based on the “best fit” of the duties within the existing classification structure. The “best fit” is determined by the majority (i.e., more than 50%) of the work assigned to and performed by the position when compared to the class concepts and definition of this specification or through other methods of position analysis. Position analysis defines the nature and character of the work through the use of any or all of the following: definition statements; listing of areas of specialization; representative examples of work performed; allocation patterns of representative positions; job evaluation guide charts, standards or factors; statements of inclusion and exclusion; licensure or certification requirements; and other such information necessary to facilitate the assignment of positions to the appropriate classification.

B. Inclusions

This classification series encompasses positions located within the University of Wisconsin (UW) Medical School and the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene, and Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) Bureau of Health Information & Policy. Positions at the Medical School provide coding and analysis work of medical diagnoses and procedures for physician reimbursement, the single position within the UW School of Veterinary Medicine which performs coding of medical diagnoses and procedures for non-human inpatients and outpatients. Positions at the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene perform analysis, coding, recordkeeping, quality assurance, and education related to occupational injuries and illness for Wisconsin that is used for state and national statistics and public health purposes. Positions within the Department of Health and Family Services’ Bureau of Health Information & Policy perform coding and analysis of medical diagnoses on Wisconsin birth and death certificates for state and national statistical and public health purposes.

C. Exclusions

Excluded from this classification series are the following types of positions:

1. Positions that do not perform medical coding work for the majority of the time.
2. Positions which meet the statutory definition of supervisor or management as defined in Wis. Stats. 111.81(19) and (13) as administered and interpreted by the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission.

3. Positions that for a majority of the time (more than 50%) perform duties that are more appropriately classified as Medical Record Librarian or Medical Record Technician.
4. All other positions which are more appropriately identified by other classification specifications.

D. Entrance and Progression Through This Series

Employees enter positions in this classification series by competition. Progression to the Senior level is through reclassification as the employee satisfactorily attains the specified training, education, and experience. Movement to the Advanced level may be through reclassification or competition (lead worker positions require competition).

## II. DEFINITIONS

### CODING TECHNICIAN

There are four allocations at this level: (1) positions in the UW Medical School; (2) a position in the UW School of Veterinary Medicine; (3) positions in the UW-Madison Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene; and, (4) positions in the Department of Health and Family Services' Bureau of Health Information & Policy, Vital Records Section.

- 1) In the UW Medical School, positions at this level are designed to develop proficiency in performing coding functions including Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes and modifiers, International Classification of Diseases (ICD) diagnosis codes and prioritization, third party payer coding/billing requirements, and ensuring documentation compliance with federal regulations for teaching facilities and physicians. Positions for a majority of the time perform routine and less complex inpatient and outpatient procedural and diagnosis coding, abstracting from medical records, physician notes, dictations, and other documentation, and perform limited analysis work for all physician services. In addition, these positions may perform this same work for all the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinic's (UWHC) outpatient services. Work is performed under close progressing to limited supervision.
- 2) In the UW School of Veterinary Medicine, this is the objective level for the position which for the majority of the time codes diagnoses, operative procedures, examinations, and diagnostic tests and procedures for all non-human inpatients and outpatients in accordance with the standards and procedures of the Standard Nomenclature of Veterinary Diseases and Operations, and maintains the related database(s).
- 3) In the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene, these are entry level positions working under close to limited supervision. These positions are designed to develop proficiency in performing OSHA surveying, analysis, coding, recordkeeping, quality assurance, and education related to occupational injuries and illness for Wisconsin that is used for state and national statistics and public health purposes. Positions at this level perform more routine and less complex coding. This work includes analyzing the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illness that employers describe injuries and illnesses that occurred. These positions must ensure that the information is accurate and complete. These positions spend a great deal of time communicating with employers about questions they have about reporting, problems with their reporting, and provide training on areas that employers are unclear about, unaware of, or that are done in error. In order to properly code the injuries and illnesses, they many times need to consult other

people/or documentation for further information such as coroners, death certificates, police, sheriff, workers compensation, etc. The information coded by these positions provides data for State, Federal and National reporting for Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI). OSHA will utilize this information for a variety of reasons, such as deciding which companies are high risk and that they need to audit, which could cost an employer millions of dollars. The coding also affects the employer's insurance rates. Correct coding affects the safety of millions of workers because the information may indicate a serious problem that needs to be addressed.

- 4) In the Bureau of Health Information & Policy in the Department of Health and Family Services, this is the entry level for positions which for a majority of the time classify and code medical conditions reported on Wisconsin's birth and death certificates and fetal death reports. This work includes analyzing certificates and reports for completeness and acceptability of information provided, and contacting physicians, coroners, medical records personnel, or other information originators as needed to correct, complete, or verify medical information. The ICD codes and other special classifications assigned by the incumbents of these positions provide the data for State and national cause-of-death databases.

### **CODING TECHNICIAN-SENIOR**

There are three allocations at this level: (1) positions in the UW Medical School; (2) positions at UW-Madison, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene; and (3) positions in the Department of Health and Family Services' Bureau of Health Information & Policy.

- 1) This is objective level work in the proficient performance of both routine and complex human inpatient and outpatient procedural and diagnosis coding within the UW Medical School. Complex coding situations vary depending on the Department, but typical examples include interventional radiology, trauma, patient complications, re-operative surgeries, and other non-routine cases. Coding functions include CPT codes and modifiers, ICD diagnosis codes and prioritization, third party payer coding/billing requirements, and ensuring documentation compliance with federal regulations for teaching facilities and physicians. Positions abstract needed clinical information from medical records, physician notes, dictations, other documentation, and perform analysis work for all physician services. In addition, positions may perform this same work for UWHC outpatient services. Positions provide compliance review and case-specific educational in-services to physicians and other clinical and fiscal staffs on correct dictation, coding and billing practices. Positions research individual patient coding issues as required, review accounts, obtain and verify information from medical reports and provide additional information and/or explanations to the UW Medical Foundation and/or UWHC Fiscal Affairs regarding coded/billed services. Positions ensure that all services are coded and billed. Work is performed under general supervision.
- 2) In the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene, these are objective level positions that work independently under general supervision. Positions at this level perform all the duties identified in the Coding Technician level and in addition they perform both the routine and the most complex coding.
- 3) The third allocation at the senior level is within the Bureau of Health Information & Policy. This is objective level work in the proficient medical classification of both routine and complex medical diagnoses for multiple and underlying causes of death, including rare causes of death and those involving threats to public safety (communicable diseases). Positions require certification by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) in multiple cause of death

classification. Analyses are conducted for monitoring birth and death trends in Wisconsin and to supply data for annual birth and death reports required by Wisconsin statute, chapter 69. The position abstracts and conveys birth and death data for new and ongoing special interest research and public health studies, such as AIDS and maternal health projects. The position provides compliance and quality reviews for the National Center for Health Statistics. Technical assistance and consultation are provided in case-specific situations on a daily basis with coroners, physicians, medical examiners, attorneys, and researchers. Coding functions include ICD diagnostic classifications, nosology (certification) standards, and NCHS coding specifications for multiple and underlying causes of death. The position analyzes and codes circumstantial death data, such as all injury-related deaths and all pregnancy-related deaths. The position ensures that all statutory requirements pertaining to medical aspects of death certificates are met and interprets statutes for data suppliers.

### **CODING TECHNICIAN-ADVANCED**

There are three allocations at this level: (1) positions in the UW Medical School; (2) position at UW-Madison, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene and (3) positions in the Department of Health and Family Services' Bureau of Health Information & Policy.

- 1) In the UW Medical School, under general direction, positions at this level perform all the duties of a Coding Technician Senior. In addition, positions research new regulations, new codes and billing procedures and assignment of fees, and provide comprehensive training and guidance to physicians, non-physician providers, other allied health professionals and staff, resolve complex insurance inquiries, and serve as liaison to outside entities on coding-related issues. Positions closely assist the Supervisor in identifying and implementing correct coding policies, procedures and billing protocols, particularly as they evolve through rule changes of third-party payers. In Departments with several coders, positions provide training and consultation to entry-level and Senior Coding Technicians, and may coordinate the unit's work flow. Positions audit charges and/or records for insurance compliance and independently provide direction to staff in health information record completion requirements. Positions at this level additionally perform at least two of the following duties:
  - Formal Quality Assurance/Improvement activities, including the identification of data to be collected and developing summary reports.
  - Develop documentation systems to ensure all services are billed and work with the University of Wisconsin Medical Foundation or Information Systems staff regarding systems development and modification.
  - Prepare trend and/or custom analyses for faculty, insurance carriers or administration.
- 2) In the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene, under general direction, the positions at this level perform all the duties of a Coding Technician Senior. In addition, these positions act as the lead worker over the other Coding Technicians. The positions will serve as the technical expert to provide training to the other Coding Technicians. The lead workers will be responsible for quality assurance of the Coding Technician's work, and running queries and also manual checks to ensure accuracy of coding and recordkeeping for the State, Federal and National reports. The positions will be responsible for managing the surveying and receipt of reports from employers (Wisconsin has the largest number of reports in the nation.)
- 3) In the DHFS Bureau of Health Information & Policy, under general direction, positions at this level perform all the duties of a Coding Technician Senior. In addition, these positions are considered statewide technical experts in coding birth conditions on birth worksheets, coding cause of death on fetal deaths and death certificates, in enabling researchers and public health

officials to effectively use the data for program evaluations, in budget planning and in determining effective ways to prevent certain types of deaths. Responsibilities include providing training and expert guidance for other unit coders, hospital staff, physicians, coroners and medical examiners in the performance of their job duties. At the Coding Technician Advanced level positions communicate, advise, and educate a wide variety of business partners regarding many issues pertaining to birth, death and fetal death, Wisconsin State laws, administrative rules, guidelines and processes. These positions independently contact medical certifiers (physicians, medical examiners, and/or coroners), in consulting on causes of death to accurately identify, record, and submit complex medical classifications. These positions will serve in an advisory capacity with research analysts in the use of the classification codes and reporting trends. These positions work in partnership with research analysts to identify areas needing additional quality assurance and improvement activities. These positions may provide in service training to other staff (including other coding staff) in the Vital Records Section of the Bureau of Health Information & Policy. The positions may also serve on a variety of committees in an advisory role.-

### **III. QUALIFICATIONS**

The qualifications required for these positions will be determined at the time of recruitment. Such determinations will be made based upon an analysis of the goals and worker activities performed and by an identification of the education, training, work, certification, or other life experiences which would provide reasonable assurance that the knowledge and skills required upon appointment have been acquired. Coding Technicians at the Senior and Advanced levels would typically meet the skills, training, and experience criteria for national certification as a Certified Procedural Coder (CPC) or Accredited Record Technician (ART). Select positions may require training and certification from the National Center for Health Statistics.

### **IV. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

This classification series was created effective May 10, 1998 and announced in Bulletin CC/SC-85 to describe positions which perform medical coding a majority of the time. These positions were identified during a review of Medical Record Technician positions and were formerly classified as a Medical Record Technician 1 or Program Assistant 1, 2 or 3.

The classification was modified effective October 7, 2001 and announced in Bulletin CLR/SC-134 to create a DHFS allocation at the senior level.

This classification was modified effective May 13, 2007 and announced in Bulletin OSER-0164-MRS-SC to include positions at the UW-Madison, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene and to update the organizational structure and duties of positions at the Department of Health and Family Services.

This classification was modified effective March 2, 2008 and announced in Bulletin OSER-0183-MRS-SC to add an allocation at the Advanced level in the Department of Health and Family Services.

GRL/JMW/DLT/SH  
36301