Program Name:
Missouri Cancer Registry and Research Center

Title of Success Story: Use of MCR online educational resources by rural college HIT program

Operational Challenge:

MCR-ARC staff provide training for several large junior college Health Information Technology (HIT) programs; however, there are smaller programs in the state with which we have not been able to work. It is important to reach these future "coders" as many of these students are likely to be employed at low-volume facilities (75 or fewer cancer cases annually) after graduation and may be assigned to report cancer cases for their facilities. Teaching them the significance of cancer registration and how to perform casefinding while they are students might improve their ability to report cases accurately in the future. It is hoped that some of these students might further explore the cancer registry profession and become Certified Tumor Registrars (CTRs) at some point.

Intervention:

An individual we trained while working at a small Missouri hospital became the Director of a Health Information Management program at a small college in Missouri. As a result of her experience in reporting cancer cases to the MCR, her familiarity with our website, the NAACCR webinars and the lack of available "internship hours" in rural areas, she chose to incorporate MCR's resources into her program. Students are required to visit the MCR-ARC website and complete reading assignments, such as the example below:

Reading Assignment
Documentation for Health Records
Chapter 4 – Documentation for Statistical Reporting and Public Health

Web-Based Activity

Research the Missouri Cancer Registry and Research Center and summarize its purpose and types of data collected. What types of diseases are reportable to our state health department? How does HIPAA affect releasing data? Describe the HIM professional's role in managing a registry.

Summarize your findings in a double-spaced, one-two page, report and submit in the web-based activity DropBOX for grading.

http://mcr.umh.edu/

Discussion Board

After reading and researching about the different registries and the types of data that are collected for each, how do you see the HIM professional's role in the management and reporting of these data? How important is it to collect accurate data?

Describe HIPAA's role in releasing patient data to databanks and health registries.

Describe three new facts that you learned about the content of the health record, primary/secondary users, and how the data is used at a local and national level.

In addition, the instructor will be incorporating the use of the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries (NAACCR) webinars and MCR's monthly Live Meeting trainings in order to fulfill part of their internship hours and to practice neoplasm coding exercises. Throughout the courses they talk extensively about the importance of coding accurately, not only for a hospital's purposes but because the data are so valuable at the state and national level. The instructor also focuses on data outcomes and how the data may lead to development of new treatments, etc. The students will also review the low-volume facility manual and the process for reporting.

"The students have always posted positive feedback after being introduced to the Missouri Cancer Registry [and Research Center] website and [are] surprised at all the data that is collected and reported and its [MCR's] mission" – Evelyn Thomas, RHIT

Operational Impact: While the majority of MCR-ARC's cases are submitted by large hospitals, it is essential to collect data from smaller institutions as well in order to have a more complete database (> 95% of expected cases) and minimize or eliminate potential bias. Cases from low-volume facilities represent rural population areas and those with less access to healthcare resources. Coders well-trained in reporting cancer cases will:

- increase the efficiency of staff at MCR,
- require less training by MCR staff,
- result in fewer missed cases, and
- improve the quality/quantity of MCR's data.

Lessons Learned:

The fact that an HIM director chose to utilize MCR-ARC resources to enhance her college's program indicates the far-reaching benefits of having a useful website. As a result, we have built a lasting relationship with the school, so much so that we are evaluating doing a Fundamentals of Cancer Registry workshop for this program during the summer to assist with their learning. We are also considering how we might reach out to more small programs around the state.