

Area colleges offer coding courses

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By **SUSAN KREIMER** / Special Contributor

Richland College in Dallas offers a continuing education program for insurance claims coding.

It prepares students to work in doctors' offices and billing companies while training them in other tasks as well. (www.rlc.dcccd.edu/ce/a_health/medEXAM.htm)

"Our certified instructors provide answers to coding questions and help guide students to the proper answer through questioning and critical thinking techniques," said Shannon Ydoyaga, program administrator in the health professions division.

"This method helps the student find the answers on their own once they are in an employer setting."

Today's employers are demanding certification to demonstrate competency. Ms. Ydoyaga said experience is also a factor.

Richland's program readies students to take the Certified Professional Coder exam offered through the American Academy of Professional Coders (www.aapc.com).

Mountain View College in Dallas, which prepares coders for hospital and other settings, offers this curriculum online, leading to a certificate or an associate degree (www1.dcccd.edu/cat0608/programs/degree.cfm?degree=cert.himt.coding).

"Most courses are available to students without having to set foot on our campus," said Shalu Salwan, senior academic adviser. A few courses containing a lab component require on-campus presence.

"Our students also include those who are already in the field and coming back to get formal training," Ms. Salwan said.

"They have been doing their jobs for ages and learned the necessary skills but do not have a college degree to show for it. They are here to get updated, get the degree and qualify for the next promotion or pay-grade jump."

Online at: http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/classifieds/news/jobcenter/healthcare/stories/DN-h1box_30emp.ART.State.Edition1.24c6bf9.html