

**MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
ACADEMIC PROGRAM PROPOSAL**

PROPOSAL FOR:

- NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**
 SUBSTANTIAL EXPANSION/MAJOR MODIFICATION
 COOPERATIVE DEGREE PROGRAM
 WITHIN EXISTING RESOURCES or **REQUIRING NEW RESOURCES**

(For each proposed program, attach a separate cover page. For example, two cover pages would accompany a proposal for a degree program and a certificate program.)

Fortis College

Institution Submitting Proposal

October 2015

Projected Implementation Date

Associate of Science

Award to be Offered

Medical Billing and Coding

Title of Proposed Program

5213.00

Suggested HEGIS Code

51.0714

Suggested CIP Code

Education

Department of Proposed Program

Joanna Piotrowska

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Signature and Date

President/Chief Executive

3/31/2015

Date

Date Endorsed/Approved by Governing Board

Centrality to institutional mission statement and planning priorities

The proposed associate degree program is central to the mission of the school to provide “postsecondary career education to both traditional and nontraditional students through a variety of certificate and degree programs that assist adult students in enhancing their career opportunities and improving problem-solving abilities. Fortis College strives to develop within its students the desire for lifelong and continued education.” By adding this degree option, in addition to maintaining our certificate-level program, for students interested in a career in the medical billing and coding field, we are fulfilling our mission to aid students in enhancing their career opportunities by offering them more advanced course work than a typical certificate Medical Billing and Coding program, thereby making them more attractive candidates to employers, and separating them from many applicants competing for the same job opportunities. This separation from other candidates was validated utilizing the most recent MHEC ‘Trends in Degrees and Certificates by Program Maryland Higher Education Institutions 2000-2013’ (publish date of August 2014), which reports that there were no associate-degree level Medical Billing and Coding programs statewide in 2013.

Additionally, through the general education component of the proposed program, we are fulfilling our mission to develop students’ desire for lifelong learning, by offering them exposure to far greater breadth of coursework than would be seen in a certificate-level program. This aspect of the proposed program also aligns with the Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education’s statement that “general education establishes an important foundation for students to succeed in higher education and in the workplace.”

Rationale for the Program

Fortis College has been researching the possible addition of a new degree option for students interested in a career as a Medical Biller/Coder for some time, in order to offer prospective students the opportunity for greater depth and breadth in the educational experience, and exposure to topics and concepts beyond that offered in certificate programs, thereby developing a desire for lifelong learning. In addition, students may choose an associate degree program over a certificate program in order to enhance their marketability within the job market, by separating themselves from other candidates seeking the same opportunities, as an associate degree program will offer greater opportunity to further develop students’ ability to think and communicate creatively, critically, and clearly. This ability is much sought after by employers in the field, and those candidates possessing these traits will be at a significant advantage in a competitive job market. It should be pointed out that we do not anticipate this program to increase our number of graduates annually, but instead to offer our applicants an additional choice in preparation for their chosen career field. Although this would result in no change in the number of new entrants to the field, we have supplied occupational demand information within this submission document.

Description of program as it would appear in the catalog

Medical Billing and Coding

Associate of Science

100.0 Quarter Credits

Program Mission

The medical billing and coding profession continues to evolve in the new century, and technological developments have significantly enhanced both quality and productivity. Increasing complexities in coding, changes in coding standards and the current trend in healthcare industry have all contributed to a growing need for well-trained individuals to enter the medical billing and coding profession. The objective of the diploma program in Medical Billing and Coding is to prepare students with a solid foundation of billing and coding knowledge and technological skills so that they can seek entry-level employment in the healthcare industry.

Program Description

The Medical Billing and Coding diploma program prepares students for entry-level billing and coding positions in a medical office, clinic, or hospital setting. Content incorporated in the program includes how to compile, compute, process and maintain patient medical records with appropriate codes for billing purposes. Principles of billing and coding include use of the CMS 1500 form, ICD-9 and ICD-10 codes, CPT codes, HIPAA confidentiality, and legal aspects.

Program Outline

Course No.	Course Title	Quarter Credits
AHP101	Introduction to Health Professions	4
AHP105	Medical Terminology	4
AHP106	Medical Anatomy and Physiology	4
AHP200	Communications for Health Professionals	4
AHP210	Ethics and Regulatory Compliance	4
MOA110	Medical Office Procedures	4
MOA115	Medical Records and Insurance	4
MOA120	Electronic Health Records	4
MOA125	Medical Insurance and Billing	4
MOA130	Bookkeeping in the Medical Office	4
MAS120	Human Diseases and Pharmacology	4
MBC110	Procedural and Diagnostic Coding	4
MBC115	Hospital, Surgical, and Medical Coding	4
MBC120	Physician Coding	4
MBC125	Reimbursement Methods and Procedures	4

MBC130	Capstone and Career Development	4
MBC190	Externship	6
ENG101	English Composition I	5
COM101	Communication	5
MAT101	College Mathematics I	5
SCI211	Environmental Science	5
PSY101	Psychology	5
SOC101	Sociology	5
Total		100

Course Descriptions

AHP101 Introduction to Health Professions

In this course students will gain an overview of health professions and learn the basics of medical terminology, life support, and infection control. Students will also learn directives and guidelines set forth by government agencies for healthcare facilities and professionals. To help students transition successfully into college environment, this course also explores learning strategies such as reading and critical thinking, test-taking, and using computer technology for resources and class assignments.

AHP105 Medical Terminology

This course will introduce students to the terminology associated with medical language. To function effectively in health profession students must understand the structure of medical language, including prefixes, suffixes, root words and medical abbreviations. Through virtual laboratory assignments, terminology relative to the body systems is presented to help the student understand medical terminology. In addition to studying the medical terminology, the course briefly covers disease processes and treatment modalities such as psychiatry, oncology, radiology and nuclear medicine. This introductory course provides a basis for a more in-depth study of human anatomy and physiology.

AHP106 Medical Anatomy and Physiology

Students are introduced to anatomical structures and physiological function of the human body. This course defines the integumentary, skeletal, muscular, nervous, endocrine, cardiovascular, respiratory, digestive, urinary and reproductive systems. Virtual practical laboratory experiences included in the course provide an understanding of basic anatomy and physiology which is the foundation for a career in health professions.

MOA110 Medical Office Procedures

Students gain a working knowledge of reception procedures and office management skills utilized in the medical environment. Knowledge and skills related to scheduling appointments, written and oral communication including telephone techniques, reception duties, and emergency procedures are introduced. Students will learn how computers impact the medical

office environment. In addition, administrative terminology, legal, ethical, and safety concepts related to the medical office will be addressed.

MOA115 Medical Records and Insurance

Students explore the fundamentals of paper and electronic medical record management, fee determination, billing methodology, and collection processes. Students perform basic bookkeeping, coding, and third-party billing procedures. Financial management of the medical office and various medical insurance plans are discussed along with related terminology and legal regulations.

MOA120 Electronic Health Records

This course focuses on the various aspects of electronic health records including standards, setup, administration, patient charts, office visits, clinical tools, templates and pop-up text. Other topics covered include tests, procedures, and diagnosis codes, productivity center and utilities. Students will gain invaluable real-world experience through the use of the SpringCharts EHR software program. Taken as a whole, this course is designed to provide each student with the necessary tools needed to be successful in the rapidly growing field of electronic health records.

MOA125 Medical Insurance and Billing

This course builds on the foundational insurance and billing information. Students will learn in-depth concepts regarding health insurance, including the types and sources of health insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, and other carriers. To help understand the billing aspects, students will learn more about the CMS-1500, universal claims form. Legal regulations and ethical issues relating to insurance and claims will be examined.

MOA130 Bookkeeping in the Medical Office

Building on the prior coding, billing, and collection information, this course introduces students to medical practice finance and practice management. Terminology and concepts related to accounting, banking, financial records, and payroll records will be discussed. Diagnostic and procedural coding procedures are reviewed, and customer service concepts are addressed. Related legal and ethics issues will be examined.

MAS120 Human Diseases and Pharmacology

This course will introduce the students to the common diseases that affect the body systems. A review of body systems along with the causes, signs, symptoms, and treatments of the diseases will be discussed. Students will learn about the medications used as treatments. An emphasis on drug action, classification, patient education, and common side effects of these medications will be provided.

MBC110 Procedural and Diagnostic Coding

This course expands the basic diagnostic and procedural coding fundamentals already introduced. Students will use the ICD-9-CM and ICD-10-CM, CPT 4, and HCPCS Level II coding manuals to apply principles of diagnosis and procedural coding. Students learn diagnosis coding

systems with detailed instruction on how to code and properly apply the guidelines for ICD-9-CM, Volumes I, II, and III and ICD-10-CM, Volumes I and II. It also provides in-depth coverage of procedural coding systems with detailed instruction on CPT 4 coding for Anesthesia, Evaluation and Management services, surgical procedures, Pathology, Laboratory, Radiology and Medicine. HCPCS Level II coding for procedures, services, and supplies is also taught.

MBC115 Hospital, Surgical, and Medical Coding

This course provides the student with practical applications of Diagnostic and Procedural Coding Systems for facilities. Students will expand their knowledge of coding by abstracting the appropriate information from hospital records, surgical/operative reports, and medical case studies to accurately assign diagnoses and procedure codes to be used on the hospital CMS-1450 insurance claim form and for electronic claims. Students will also acquire a working knowledge of MS-DRGs (Medicare Severity Diagnosis Related Groups) assignment.

MBC120 Physician Coding

This course provides the student with practical applications of diagnostic and procedural coding systems for physician billing. Students will expand their knowledge of coding by abstracting the appropriate information from provider's progress notes and treatment plans in private clinics and other outpatient entities provided by physician's and mid-level providers to accurately assign diagnoses and procedure codes to be used on the CMS-1500 insurance claim form and for electronic submissions.

MBC125 Reimbursement Methods and Procedures

This course reviews the different types of insurance programs, payer specific guidelines, and reimbursement issues. This will include review of diagnostic and procedural coding and Medicare Severity Diagnosis Related Groups (DRGs), explanation of the Resource Based Relative Value Scale (RBRVS), Ambulatory Payment Classifications (APCs), and the National Correct Coding Initiative (NCCI). Review of insurance claims processing steps, patient billing, payment determinations, and calculations for insurance and private pay payments, and interpretation of the explanation of benefits (EOB) are integral parts of this course. Through application exercises, the student will evaluate and respond to claims denials and site resubmission requirements and will endorse the ability to process appeals. A review of insurance plans and regulation, insurance math, claims administration organizations, billing concepts, and terminology associated with accounts receivable and accounts payable are integrated into the course.

MBC130 Capstone and Career Development

This course provides a complete overview of all information and skills acquired during prior Medical Coding and Billing courses. Through a comprehensive review, the student will prepare to sit for one of the National Certified Coding Examinations. Utilizing course exercises, the students will engage all phases of professional development relative to employment.

MBC190 Externship

This course allows the student to apply what they have learned in the program curriculum to practical use in a healthcare facility under the direct supervision of a preceptor on the site. Through the externship experience, the student gain first-hand knowledge of the workplace and perform the assigned duties to meet the expectations in a professional setting. Students are expected to adapt to the work environment and reflect regularly on their learning and observations. The externship work performed, is not to be paid.

AHP200 Communications for Health Professionals

This course introduces students to the basic skills of counseling and communication, which are the foundation for all professional interactions. Further, students will understand basic psychological defense mechanisms, which show up throughout therapeutic interactions; they will know how to deal with patients who are facing incredible losses; and they will comprehend the significance of human development throughout the lifespan. They will recognize the need to serve special populations and to apply their skills to disease prevention. Additionally they will learn to work and communicate well within an interdisciplinary team; apply the highest ethical standards of their chosen professions; recognize and respond appropriately to all forms of abuse and discrimination; and address and prevent legal issues. All of the above are placed within a multicultural context allowing the health professional to better reach all patients.

AHP210 Ethics and Regulatory Compliance

This course focuses on managing the moral, legal and administrative challenges encountered in clinical and non-clinical settings. Principles and standards of practice are presented as well as ethical issues and challenges associated with a professional health care career. The ethical values presented provide a basis for an appropriate decision-making model.

ENG101 English Composition I

This course will introduce the students to English Composition and covers all aspects of writing for a College-level course, beginning with components of the essay, and ending with modes of writing and argumentation. Students cover all writing stages and strategies and learn to adapt them to their own writing and learning preferences. The student acquires skills for generating ideas and drafting preliminary outlines using brainstorming, drafting, outlining, and topic selection, while learning to revise, rewrite, and polish structure, syntax, argumentation, grammar, punctuation, word choice, and diction.

COM101 Communication

This course will introduce the students to communication with the goal of helping the student become more effective in verbal and non-verbal communication, and to be able to manage interpersonal as well as group communication. The course focuses on learning and applying practical principles to one's daily life, both in formal and informal settings. The course takes a look at the psychological, social, cultural, and linguistic factors that influence person-to-person interaction. This course is designed to give students strategies for improving their communication behavior. Some of the topics addressed include human perceptions, interpersonal dynamics, and patterns of influence, listening and verbal and visual symbols.

MAT101 College Mathematics I

This course provides an introduction to college level math with the goal of teaching students to read, write, and think mathematically in support of real world applications. Topics include solving problems using equations, developing graphs for linear equations and functions, solving polynomial equations, factoring and solving problems using quadratic equations, solving problems using rational expressions, solving systems of equations, and solving problems using roots and radicals. The focus of this course is to apply mathematics to solve problems mathematically.

SCI211 Environmental Science

Applying the scientific principles of biology, chemistry and physics, students of environmental science focus on the study of our natural resources and the impact of human activities on the environment. They learn to discuss sustainability and its links to ecosystems and natural resources, their capital, and the degradation of the environment. Issues of human population dynamics, pollution, energy resources, food resources, and environmental toxins will be considered. Solutions to global as well as local environmental issues will be explored, including how to make a personal positive impact on the environment.

PSY101 Psychology

This course provides a general overview of the field of psychology. It begins by discussing psychological research methods used to gather psychological data to provide students with a foundation for critically analyzing information. The course then discusses basic psychological concepts from the perspective and with the goal of improving the quality of life for self and others. Topics include the brain and human development, learning and memory, intelligence and creativity, motivation and emotion, personality, and the impact of stress on health. The course then discusses selected psychological disorders and associated common therapies.

SOC101 Sociology

This course is designed to introduce students to the application of the principles, methods, and major theoretical orientations of sociology in providing basic understanding of social aspects of human life.

Statewide Need

As noted previously in this document, we do not anticipate this program will increase our number of graduates annually, but instead will offer our applicants an additional choice in preparation for their chosen career field. Although this would result in no change in the number of new entrants to the field, we have researched occupational demand information for Medical Records and Health Information Technicians, with those results included below.

In researching the projected employment opportunities in Maryland, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation data shows significant employment opportunities for Medical Records and Health Information Technicians in the state, with nearly 1,700 openings projected over the 2012 – 2022 timeframe.

On a broader scale, the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook (January 8, 2014 publish date) reports that "Employment of health information technicians is projected to grow 22 percent from 2012 to 2022, much faster than the average for all occupations. The demand for health services is expected to increase as the population ages. An aging population will need more medical tests, treatments, and procedures. This will mean more claims for reimbursement from insurance companies. Additional records, coupled with widespread use of electronic health records (EHRs) by all types of healthcare providers, could lead to an increased need for technicians to organize and manage the associated information in all areas of the healthcare industry."

Data gathered from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration's O*NET website further validated the outlook and need for Medical Records and Health Information Technicians, listing this occupation among it's "Bright Outlook Occupations" with the following rationale:

"This occupation, Medical Records and Health Information Technicians, is expected to **grow rapidly.**"

Beyond these projections, current local job opportunities in the market were researched to validate the need for medical billers/coders in our local area. Using only employment opportunities posted within the last 30 days, we found over 15 current openings for Medical Billers/Coders in the greater Landover area, several of which include multiple openings with the same organization. As such, it is clear that not only is the future outlook for the occupation bright, but the current market offers significant opportunity for trained professionals.

Reasonableness of program duplication

For sake of clarification, this proposed associate degree program will be an option for prospective students applying to Fortis College with an interest in the medical billing/coding field, specifically for those desiring a well-rounded education, with greater depth and breadth than typical certificate-level program offers. Additionally, prospective students may select a

degree program as a means to distinguish themselves with future employers, and enhance their marketability. As we currently offer a certificate program in Medical Billing and Coding at our campus, this will provide applicants with a decision point regarding their path to enter the field, and is not an additional program that would result in unnecessary duplication.

Utilizing the most recent MHEC 'Trends in Degrees and Certificates by Program Maryland Higher Education Institutions 2000-2013' (publish date of August 2014), there were no associate-degree level Medical Billing and Coding programs statewide in 2013. As such, there is no duplication of any existing programs in Maryland at this time.

Adequacy of faculty resources

As we currently offer a certificate Medical Billing and Coding program, we have more than adequate faculty resources available to deliver the associate degree program version proposed here. Our current staffing summary is as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Academic Title</u>	<u>Terminal Degree/Field</u>	<u>Status</u>
Michael Bright	Program Director, Medical Billing and Coding	B.S./Environmental Science	Full Time
Ponsella Woody- Poindexter	Faculty	Certificate/Allied Health Instructor	Adjunct
Claudette Miller	Faculty	Certificate/ Allied Health Instructor	Adjunct

Adequacy of library resources

At this time, we have a staffed Library Resource Center that is equipped with significant resources to support all of our program offerings. Our physical materials consist of approximately 1,200 titles, in the following areas:

- Dental (Hygiene & Assisting)
- Career Development
- Pharmacy
- Medical Billing and Coding
- Medical Assisting
- General Education
- Medical Laboratory Technician
- General Interest
- Research and Development
- Reference

Additionally, our students have access to a number of online resources:

- ProQuest (Health & Medical Complete, Nursing & Allied Health, Psychology Journals)
Contains 3397 journals with comprehensive coverage of Health, Medical, Nursing, Allied Health, and Psychology Journals.
- Gale InfoTrac
Includes 33 databases comprising 33740 titles across all academic disciplines. 3716 of these are health and medical titles and 2726 of these are science and technology

titles. Key databases include: Academic OneFile, Gale Virtual Reference Library, Health Reference Center Academic, and Science in Context.

- ELibrary
Almost 2,600 resources which include: selected periodicals, reference books, maps, pictures, and newspapers from around the world, along with transcripts of news and public affairs broadcasts.
- Films on Demand
Health & Medicine Video Collection over 2,700 videos. Subject areas include: Diseases, Disorders & Disabilities, Health Care & Treatment, Human Anatomy and Physiology, and Public Health.

Our LRC resources will continue to be monitored by LRC staff, our Dean of Education and the Campus President, to ensure relevancy to our program offerings, as well as quality and quantity to support our students' educational pursuits.

Adequacy of physical facilities, infrastructure and instructional equipment

As the proposed program represents a degree version of a currently offered certificate program, we currently have the appropriate resources, in sufficient quantity, to deliver the program. This includes classrooms, staff, and a fully equipped computer lab area, with software to support this program. As is always the case, program enrollment will dictate the quantity of these items needed to effectively deliver the program, and these quantities will be monitored by program faculty, our Dean of Education and the Program Advisory Committee.

Adequacy of financial resources

Any costs associated with the implementation of this new program version will be paid from the operating budget of Fortis College. Once operational, it is projected that the program will generate enough revenue to cover continuing costs of delivery, and return a modest profit.

TABLE 1: RESOURCES:

Resource Categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
1. Reallocated Funds	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2. Tuition/Fee Revenue (c + g below)	140,000	210,000	280,000	350,000	350,000
a. Number of F/T Students	10	15	20	25	25
b. Annual Tuition/Fee Rate	14,000	14,000	14,000	14,000	14,000
c. Total F/T Revenue (a x b)	140,000	210,000	280,000	350,000	350,000
d. Number of P/T Students	0	0	0	0	0
e. Credit Hour Rate	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
f. Annual Credit Hour Rate	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
g. Total P/T Revenue (d x e x f)	0	0	0	0	0
3. Grants, Contracts & Other External Sources	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4. Other Sources	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
TOTAL (Add 1 – 4)	140,000	210,000	280,000	350,000	350,000

TABLE 2: EXPENDITURES:

Expenditure Categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
1. Faculty (b + c below)	47,450	63,250	79,065	94,875	94,875
a. # FTE	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.0
b. Total Salary	41,250	55,000	68,750	82,500	82,500
c. Total Benefits	6,200	8,250	10,315	12,375	12,375
2. Admin. Staff (b + c below)	17,250	34,500	34,500	51,750	51,750
a. # FTE	0.5	1	1	1.5	1.5
b. Total Salary	15,000	30,000	30,000	45,000	45,000
c. Total Benefits	2,250	4,500	4,500	6,750	6,750
3. Support Staff (b + c below)	28,750	28,750	57,500	57,500	57,500
a. # FTE	0.5	0.5	1	1	1
b. Total Salary	25,000	25,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
c. Total Benefits	3,750	3,750	7,500	7,500	7,500
4. Equipment	2,500	3,750	5,000	6,250	6,250
5. Library	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
6. New or Renovated Space					
7. Other Expenses	40,000	42,500	45,000	50,000	55,000
TOTAL (Add 1 – 7)	137,950	174,750	223,065	262,375	267,375

Program Outline - A.S. in Medical Billing and Coding
100 Quarter Credits

Course No.	Course Title	Quarter Credits	Equivalent Semester Credits
AHP101	Introduction to Health Professions	4	2.67
AHP105	Medical Terminology	4	2.67
AHP106	Medical Anatomy and Physiology	4	2.67
AHP200	Communications for Health Professionals	4	2.67
AHP210	Ethics and Regulatory Compliance	4	2.67
MOA110	Medical Office Procedures	4	2.67
MOA115	Medical Records and Insurance	4	2.67
MOA120	Electronic Health Records	4	2.67
MOA125	Medical Insurance and Billing	4	2.67
MOA130	Bookkeeping in the Medical Office	4	2.67
MAS120	Human Diseases and Pharmacology	4	2.67
MBC110	Procedural and Diagnostic Coding	4	2.67
MBC115	Hospital, Surgical, and Medical Coding	4	2.67
MBC120	Physician Coding	4	2.67
MBC125	Reimbursement Methods and Procedures	4	2.67
MBC130	Capstone and Career Development	4	2.67
MBC190	Externship	6	4.00
ENG101	English Composition I	5	3.33
COM101	Communication	5	3.33
MAT101	College Mathematics I	5	3.33
SCI211	Environmental Science	5	3.33
PSY101	Psychology	5	3.33
SOC101	Sociology	5	3.33
Total		100	66.70

Fortis College Response

In response to this item, our instructional designers have made minor revisions to our suite of general education course offerings, with these revised courses reflected in the chart below:

General Education Requirement (GERs)	Fortis College Courses	Quarter Credits	Equivalent Semester Credit Hours
Arts and Humanities	Communication	5.0	3.333
Social/Behavioral Science	Psychology	5.0	3.333
Biological/Physical Science	Environmental Science	5.0	3.333
Mathematics	College Mathematics I	5.0	3.333
English	English Composition I	5.0	3.333
Other	Sociology	5.0	3.333
Total General Education Requirements (GERs)		30	20

We appreciate your thorough review of our proposal documents, and for your feedback regarding these issues. As we have addressed the concerns and issues conveyed in your February 6, 2015 e-mail, and are submitting a full proposal document with this response, we would request an update from you as our proposal continues through the process of further review and, ultimately, approval.

Sincerely,

Don McMullen

Don McMullen
Campus President