



## Hartford Hospital Leads the Industry in Workforce Development; Develops Coding Training Programs in Collaboration With Area Schools

Hartford Hospital's workforce development program for entry and midlevel skilled workers has been recognized as a model for programs nationwide by the National Fund for Workforce Solutions.

Leticia Colon of Learning and Organizational Development was invited to speak about the programs in Washington, DC at the National Conference for Workforce Collaborations in June. The hospital is leading the industry in college enrollment success, program completion rates, data collection, and multi-organization collaborations, and was noted for its ability to communicate these successes to a broader audience. More than 1,500 staff members participated in some form of staff development this fiscal year, from computer training to basic math and grammar to college preparation and business skills.

"Hartford Hospital's program is different from other adult learning models because of its commitment to meeting people where they are, and its connections with community resources," Colon said. "All of this results in training opportunities and permanent educational pathways for our staff."

Hartford Hospital has managed to stay innovative

and develop new collaborative programs over the last five years because it has been a leader in workforce development in the city of Hartford and in the state of Connecticut, participating in major health care training initiatives.

HH participated in developing the only college-based program in New England for training in health information technology (HIT). While HIT programs across the nation were being developed without employer input, staff from Hartford HealthCare provided curriculum development support for the HIT program at Capital Community College in Hartford.

"Hartford Hospital was in a pivotal place to work with the college on this major initiative and help develop a program that would meet the health information technology and coding needs of the hospital in the near future," Colon said. "When the program was ready, we enrolled more than 25 staff members in the classes."

Coding requirements in the health care industry are about to undergo a huge change, to a system called ICD-10, which has been mandated by October 2013. Many health care providers are scrambling to prepare for the changes that will be required, and to assure that coding

personnel are properly trained to accommodate the coming changes.

Hartford Hospital leveraged its workforce collaborations to develop a plan to make the necessary transitions to ICD-10. Colon met with Nio Queiro, director of Revenue Cycle for Hartford HealthCare; Cindy Pugliese, director of Health Information Management for Hartford Hospital and Heidi Werth, training manager for Revenue Cycle, to develop training plans and resources to meet the staffing needs anticipated in the near future.

As a result, Hartford HealthCare is collaborating with several schools and organizations, including Capital Workforce Partners, Capital Community College, Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund, and Charter Oak State College to develop two training tracks that will not only meet HHC's needs, but is leading the way to create a viable solution for a statewide staffing problem.

One is an on-line biomedical curriculum at Charter Oak to support the training of current staff on the requirements of ICD-10, while Capital Community College will co-create an 18-month certificate program, designed to develop a coder pipeline, which will be certified by the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA).

Lastly, HHC leveraged funds through Capital Workforce Partners to train four coders in specialty areas such as interventional cardiology and radiology coding. The training provides development and growth opportunities for our staff, but also saves HHC thousands of dollars in contractor costs and assures our ability to handle complex coding cases in-house.

Four coders have completed an ICD-10 trainer certification program run by AHIMA, which builds HHC's internal capacity to train staff to deal with the anticipated changes.