



The Advantages of Certification

For the Professional Healthcare Coder: Becoming a Certified General Surgery Coding Specialist (CGSCS) will acknowledge that you possess specific skills which set you apart as a professional, dedicated to both your employer and your profession. In pledging to uphold the PAHCS Code of Ethics, you will be required to continually improve and update your knowledge and skills, and maintain high standards of competency, honesty, and integrity. The recognition you receive from achieving this certification will attest to your abilities and dedication.

For the Physician(s) / Practice Owner(s): The Certified General Surgery Coder is a professional who adheres to the Code of Ethics of PAHCS. The employment of a Certified General Surgical Coder will assure you that this individual has achieved a high level of competency in coding specifically for your Surgical office practice.

The Process

Members of PAHCS who are coders and are actively involved in medical office coding may apply to take the specialty examination. Qualification requires that a specific level of education and experience be achieved before one can sit for the written examination. The three areas in which a candidate must qualify are:

1. *Experience* - Active employment as a healthcare coder, performing duties that qualify as practical coding for a minimum of two years.
2. *Education* - Formal education in courses pertinent to healthcare coding. By a special arrangement with McVey Associates, Inc., the education requirement can be attained by attending the two or one day courses presented by McVey Associates as well.
3. *References* - Recognition as a Healthcare Coder by both peers and employer(s).

After the candidate has successfully completed the written exam, he/she will be certified as a Certified Surgery Coding Specialist by the Professional Association of Healthcare Coding Specialists for a period of two years. To recertify members must accumulate 24 CEUs.

The Written Examination

Application forms for membership and to take the examination can be obtained on line at www.pahcs.org by e-mailing your request to members@pahcs.org or by calling the National Office at 888-708-4707 (A real live person will answer). The written examination is divided into two sections. The first section is comprised of 50 questions on General Surgery coding. The second section is a series of 150 questions about relevant coding knowledge pertinent to all specialties. The entire examination is open book. Standard coding manuals are the main reference texts. Additional information is available upon request. The examination will be offered the day after the McVey in-depth course, usually in the same location.

Lee Browder
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