



From the accidental
profession to a
career of choice:

TRANSFORMING FRONT LINE
REVENUE CYCLE

July 19, 2016

Learning Objectives

- ▶ Participants will be able to:
 - ▶ Describe the need for industry-specific and general education for revenue cycle professionals
 - ▶ Evaluate job descriptions for the purpose of identifying career ladder optimizations
 - ▶ Identify options for community-wide collaboration for revenue cycle education solutions

The story of my life (at work):

- ▶ “I do not know where family doctors acquired illegibly perplexing handwriting; nevertheless, extraordinary pharmaceutical intellectuality, counterbalancing indecipherability, transcendentalizes intercommunications’ incomprehensiblensess.”

The Challenge

- ▶ “As leaders, we are inundated with requests to change, modify or create new processes. We must be groundbreakers in the educational evolution, providing materials that associates will easily recall and execute, while delivering exceptional quality service. **Unfortunately, we don't go to college to be Patient Access registrars.** Therefore, it is the leaders' responsibility to mold the minds of associates, thus creating educated associate members. Talk about overwhelming pressure!”

Source: Are You a Groundbreaker in the Educational Evolution?
by Wendy M. Roach, Access Management Journal Volume 38 Issue 2

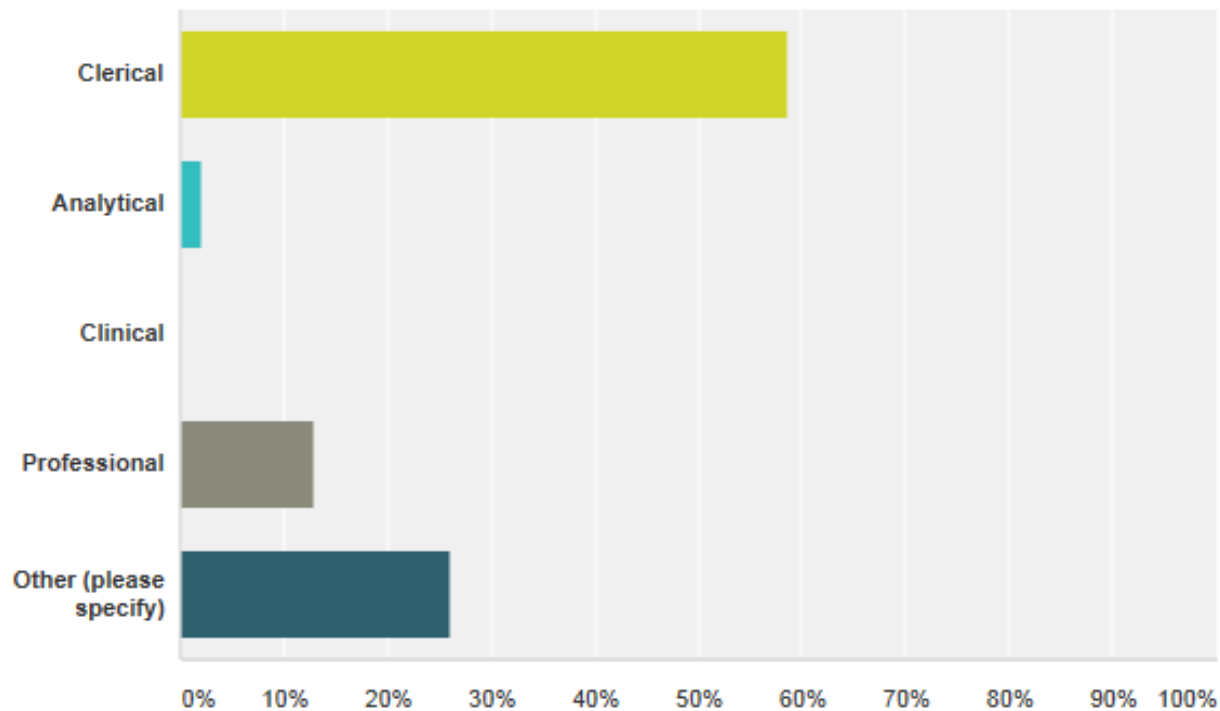
The dreaded C-word

- ▶ 88% of non-PAS respondents feel like the best descriptive category for Patient Access Services is

CLERICAL

“Clerks” no more

- ▶ Which of the descriptive categories below do you think most describes Patient Access?



PAS Reps don't feel respected

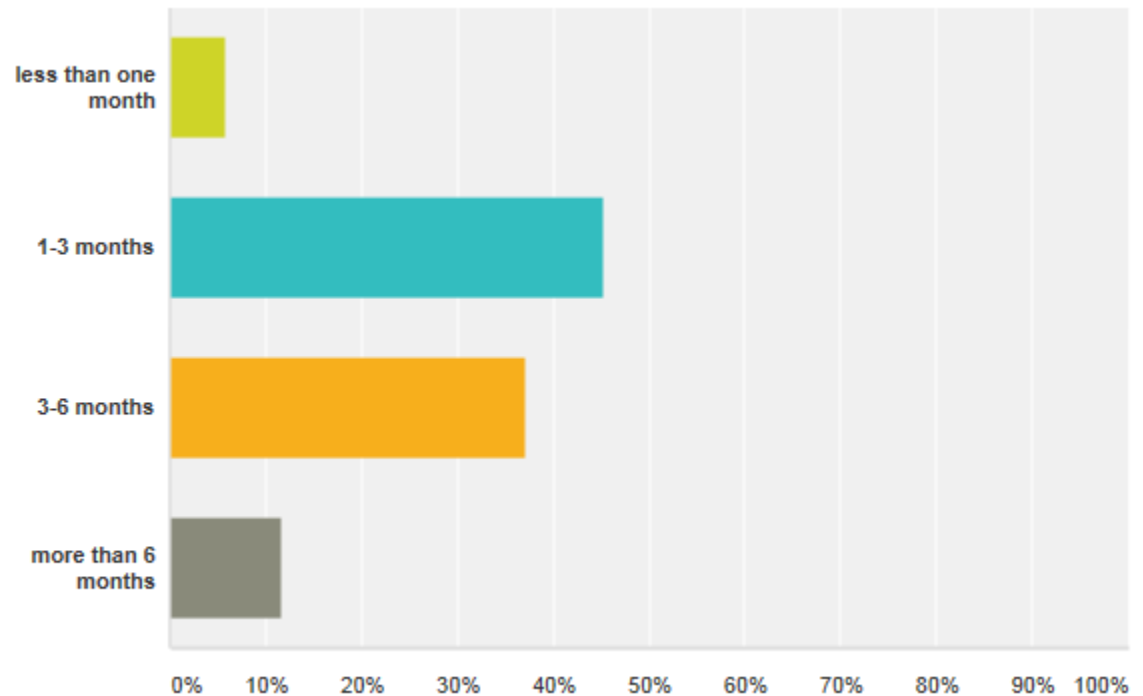
- ▶ Do you feel like other employees in the healthcare field have professional respect for those who are working in patient access services?
 - ▶ No – 56%
 - ▶ Yes – 24%
 - ▶ Other – 20%
 - ▶ “Yes, when they take the time to find out what we do”

We are important

- ▶ When asked to rate the level of impact Patient Access employees have on four areas, a majority of respondents said that Patient Access plays a **significant** role:
 - ▶ Patient Safety - 66%
 - ▶ Compliance - 73%
 - ▶ Financial Integrity - 81%
 - ▶ Patient Satisfaction - 90%
- ▶ Options were:
 - ▶ none, minimal, some, significant, or I don't know

But they think it's easy to learn

- ▶ How much time on the job do you think it takes for a new patient access employee to feel confident and comfortable performing his/her job responsibilities without assistance?



Patient Access Reps disagree

- ▶ less than one month:

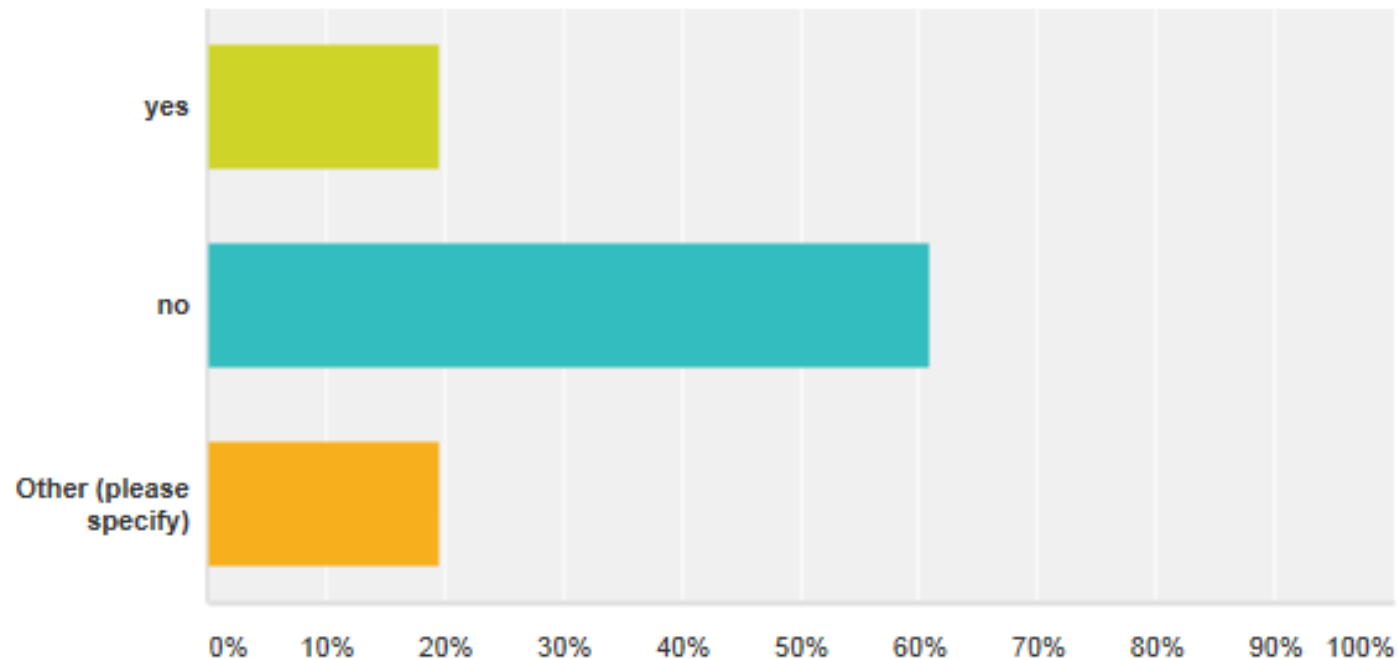
0%

- ▶ more than 6 months:

58%

And they want more education

- ▶ Do you think the training and education provided by the hospital is sufficient for patient access employees to feel confident and comfortable performing their role?



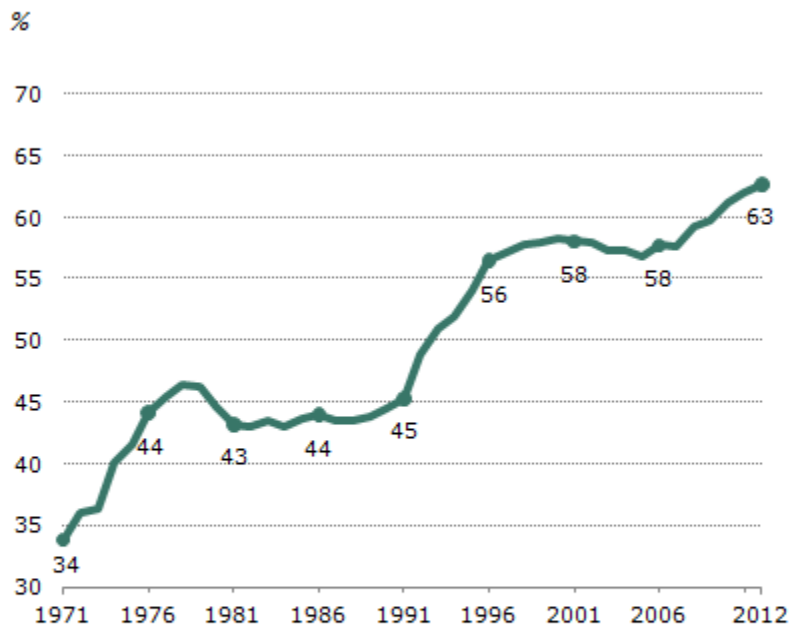
Types of knowledge

- ▶ Declarative knowledge
 - ▶ Facts and information
 - ▶ Learned by hearing, seeing
- ▶ Procedural knowledge
 - ▶ Exercised in the performance of a task
 - ▶ Learned by doing

Millennials Highly Educated

- ▶ Best-educated generation in history
- ▶ Fully 34% have bachelors degree

Share of 25- to 29-Year-Olds Completing at Least Some College



Note: Some college includes those completing bachelor's and associate degrees as well as those completing some college credits but no degree. The educational attainment question was changed in 1992. Before 1992, some college meant completing at least one year of college. Since 1992, the term means completing any college at all.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of March Current Population Surveys, 1971-2012

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Why Not College?

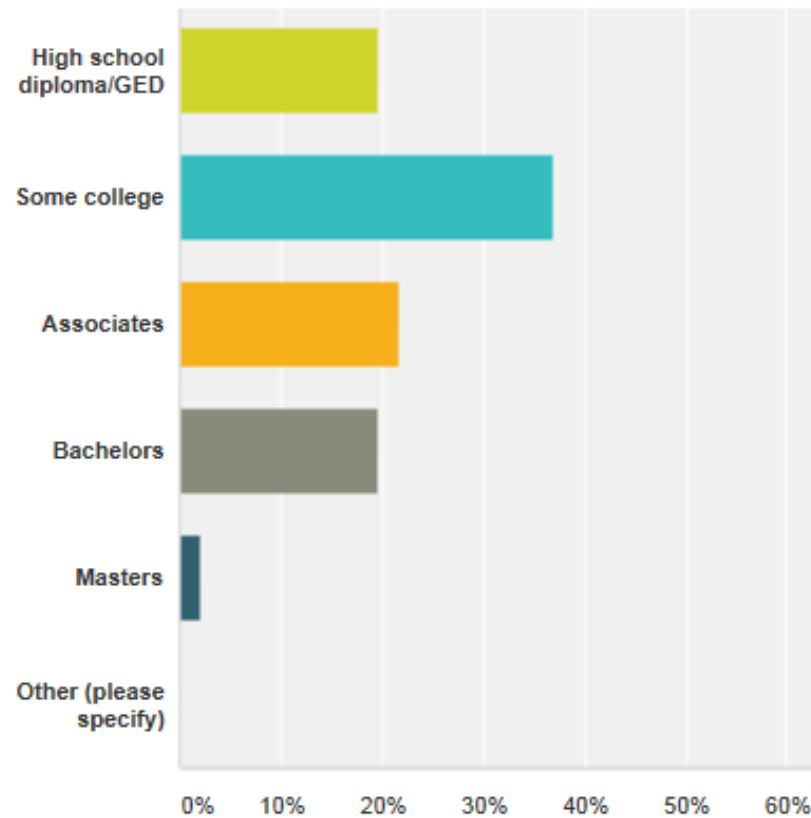
- ▶ “Nearly every parent surveyed (94%) says they expect their child to attend college, but even as college enrollments have reached record levels, most young adults in this country still do not attend a four-year college. The main barrier is financial. Among adults ages 18 to 34 who are not in school and do not have a bachelor’s degree, two-thirds say a major reason for not continuing their education is the need to support a family. Also, 57% say they would prefer to work and make money; and 48% say they can’t afford to go to college.”
 - ▶ Source: "Is College Worth It?" Pew Social Trends

Tuition Reimbursement

- ▶ Every semester, I sign multiple tuition reimbursement forms
 - ▶ Never for PAS or PFS
 - ▶ Generally for related fields (HIT, Coding, etc.)
- ▶ Typical Policy:
 - ▶ Degree programs
 - ▶ Accredited institutions
 - ▶ Passing grades
 - ▶ Applicability to current employment/employer

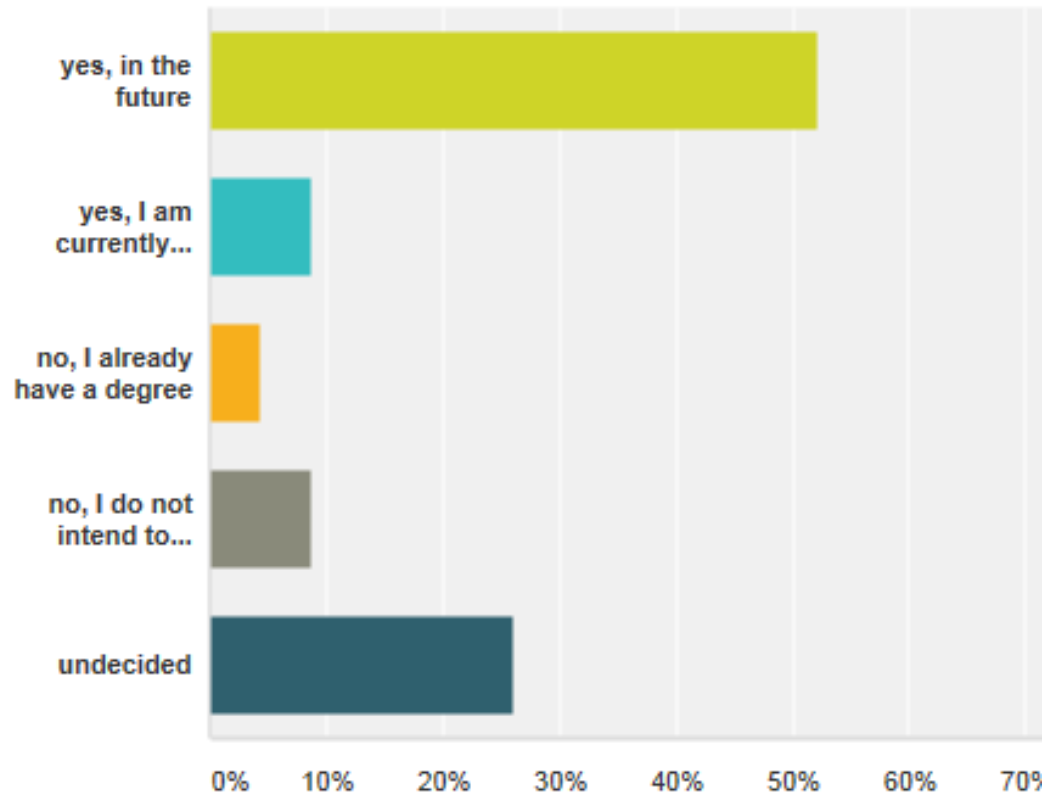
Educational Achievements

- ▶ What level of education have you achieved?



Educational Pursuits

- ▶ Are you interested in pursuing personal education goals in the future?



What Millennials Want

...from their boss

TOP FIVE CHARACTERISTICS MILLENNIALS WANT IN A BOSS

Will help me navigate my career path

Will give me straight feedback

Will mentor and coach me

Will sponsor me for formal development programs

Is comfortable with flexible schedules

...from their company

TOP FIVE CHARACTERISTICS MILLENNIALS WANT IN A COMPANY

Will develop my skills for the future

Has strong values

Offers customizable options in my benefits/reward package

Allows me to blend work with the rest of my life

Offers a clear career path

...to learn

TOP FIVE THINGS MILLENNIALS WANT TO LEARN

Technical skills in my area of expertise

Self-management and personal productivity

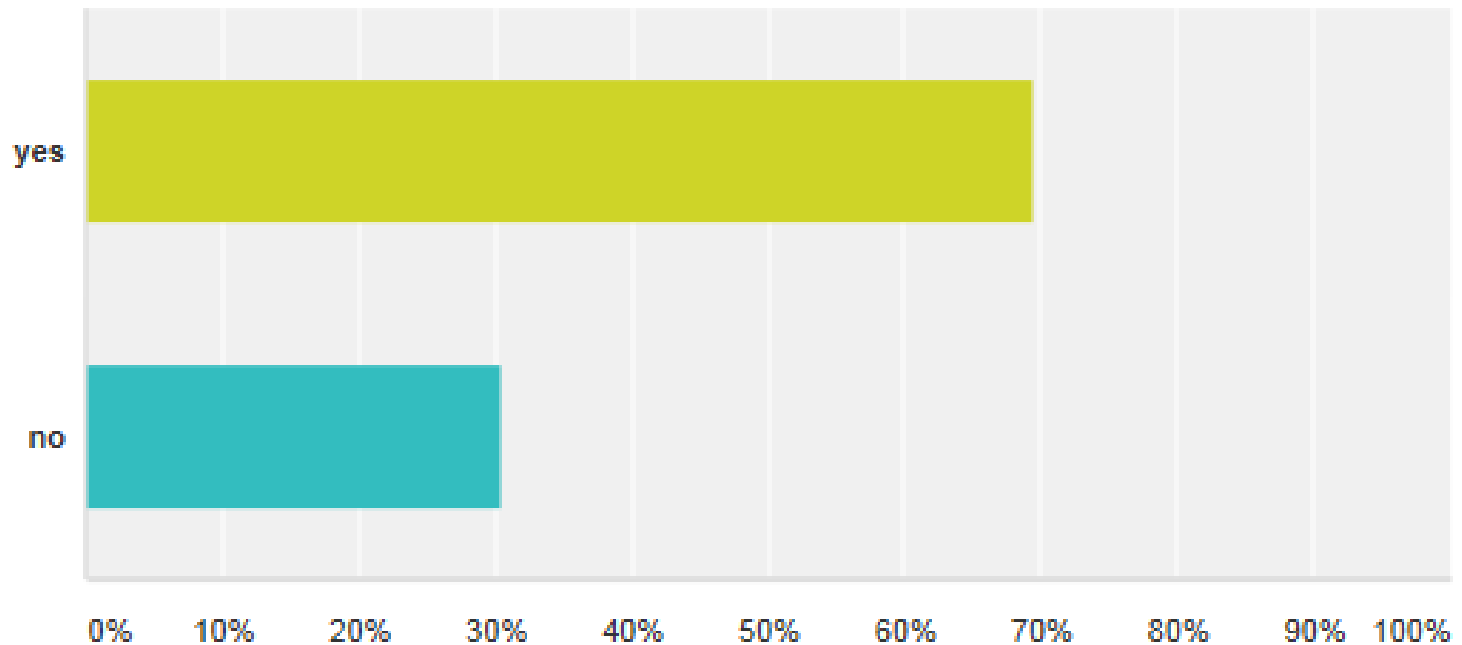
Leadership

Industry or functional knowledge

Creativity and innovation strategies

The good news!!

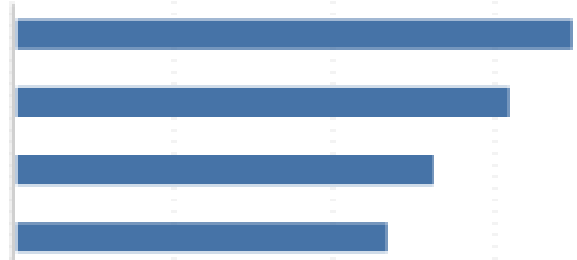
- ▶ Do you consider patient access to be a viable career choice for you?



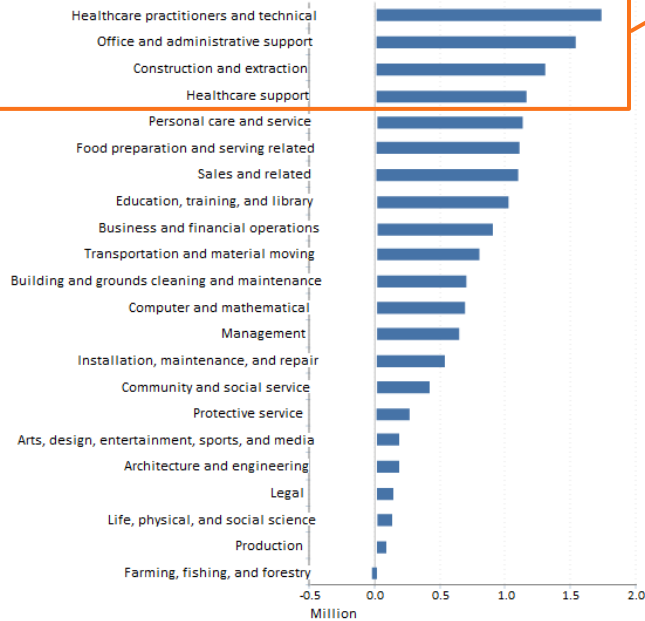
Projected Change in Healthcare Jobs

Employment by occupational group, projected change 2012-2022

Healthcare practitioners and technical
 Office and administrative support
 Construction and extraction
 Healthcare support



Employment by occupational group, projected change 2012-2022

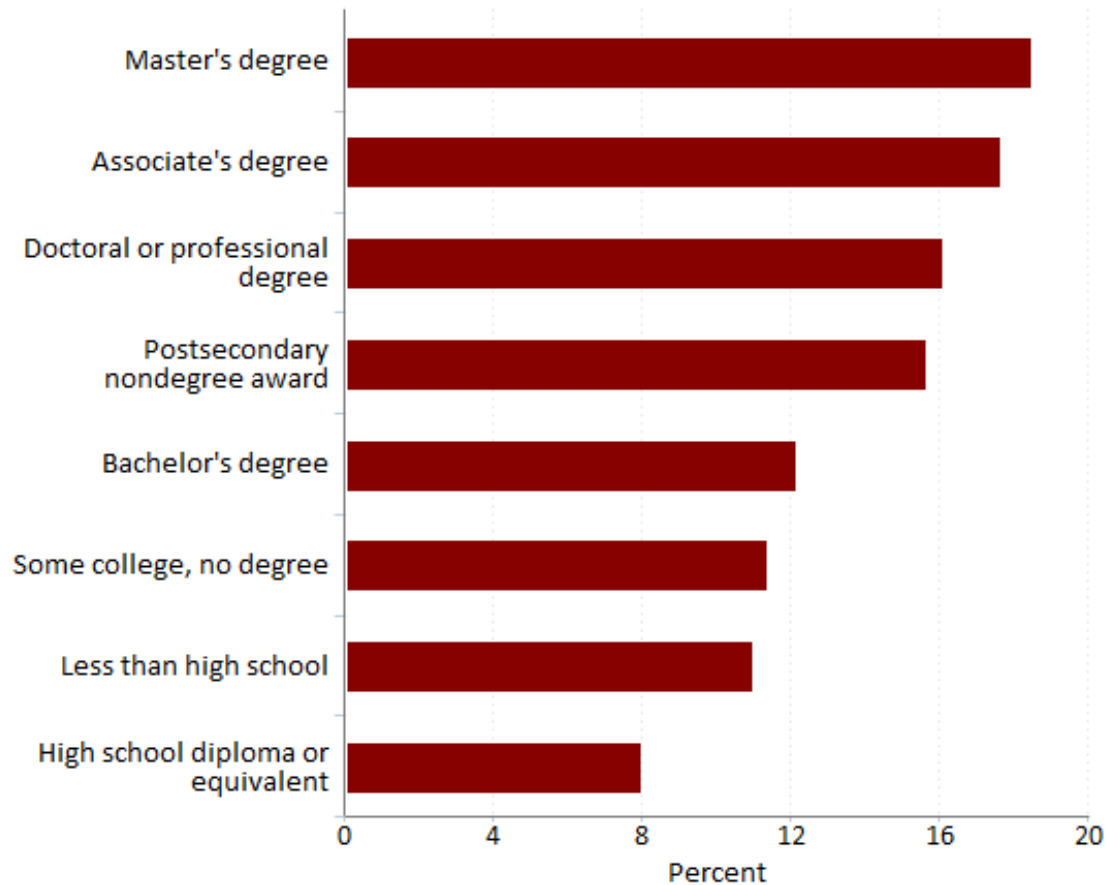


Office and administrative support: +1.7 million

Healthcare support: +1.1 million

Projected Educational Requirements

Employment by educational requirement, projected percent change 2010-2022



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.



Calculating the costs

- ▶ Purchasing a curriculum will cost you, but creating your own might cost even more:
 - ▶ Estimates show that it takes training professionals 40 hours or more to create 1 hour of instructional material
 - ▶ 40 hours (material) * 40 hours (development) * \$20/hr (salary) = \$32,000
- ▶ Put your tuition reimbursement dollars to work for you!
 - ▶ 3 credit hours for 16 weeks? 40+ hours for \$300
 - ▶ 40 hours at \$15/hour? \$600 + trainer costs

What does it mean?

- ▶ Revenue Cycle Professionals do go to college...
- ▶ ...just not to study for their current roles.
- ▶ Hospitals bear the burden of intensive (and expensive) training and education programs.
- ▶ There is an existing market for post-secondary certificate and degree programs related to Revenue Cycle functions, typically designed to prepare candidates for national certifications upon completion of degree requirements
- ▶ Limited awareness stunts the earnings potential and the **respect** that Revenue Cycle professionals should demand.

Needs Assessment

- ▶ State your case
 - ▶ What are the needs?
 - ▶ How has the situation developed?
 - ▶ What is different about now?
- ▶ Livable wages
 - ▶ What constitutes a living wage in your community?
 - ▶ Check your job descriptions – are you rewarding education?
- ▶ Professional certification prep

Community Partnerships

- ▶ Partner with local providers
 - ▶ Don't limit yourself to hospitals
 - ▶ Independent providers, physician groups, dental offices
 - ▶ Staffing agencies
- ▶ Community colleges
 - ▶ Lower tuition rates than private "diploma mills"
 - ▶ May offer more flexible schedules for working adults
 - ▶ Keeps educational dollars spent in the community

Supply and Demand

- ▶ Recruitment of Faculty
 - ▶ Who will teach the classes?
 - ▶ Do you need Masters-prepared faculty?
 - ▶ AAS vs. AS
- ▶ Students
 - ▶ Tuition reimbursement programs
 - ▶ Traditional
 - ▶ Employer partnerships
 - ▶ Internships
 - ▶ High School programs

Curriculum Design & Development

- ▶ Curriculum design
 - ▶ Can you work within an existing structure, or are you starting from scratch?
 - ▶ Figure out what existing programs you can use and/or repurpose
 - ▶ Coding courses
 - ▶ Medical terminology
 - ▶ Medical billing
 - ▶ Medical office/administrative professional
- ▶ Course design
 - ▶ Identify content experts
 - ▶ Some content can be purchased

Program Types

- ▶ Accreditation for a new degree program
 - ▶ This takes time – plan for 18 months or more
 - ▶ State review boards
- ▶ Updates to an existing degree program
 - ▶ Can be quicker
 - ▶ Internal review boards
- ▶ Non-degree program
 - ▶ Develop at the discretion of the institution
 - ▶ Shorter duration and specific content
 - ▶ Highest level of flexibility

Collaboration

- ▶ Whiteboard planning with content experts and college faculty
- ▶ Broad scope with specific goals
- ▶ Core curriculum with elective courses
- ▶ Build on what already exists

Partner with Admin & HR

- ▶ Get the support of your CFO
- ▶ Re-write your job descriptions to incentivize certification and education
 - ▶ Specify preference for candidates with certification or education
- ▶ Find out about tuition reimbursement
 - ▶ Degree programs
 - ▶ Certification programs
- ▶ Create tiers for associate advancement levels
 - ▶ Salary increase is nice
 - ▶ Recognition goes a long way

Benefits of certification

- ▶ Studies have shown that certified professionals are more productive in their work. Because of their knowledge and skills, access to special resources, and problem-solving abilities, certified employees are able to implement solutions more quickly and with fewer problems than their non-certified counterparts. And surveys show that certified professionals, in general, are paid more than their non-certified counterparts.

Source: NAHAM Candidate Guide to Certification

Benefits of education

- ▶ “Healthcare rules are becoming more complex, customers are demanding more, and staff is being held at a higher level of accountability than at any other time. **Today’s revenue cycle staff must have a broader understanding of the entire revenue cycle and how it influences the financial outcomes of their organization.**”

Benefits of Certification

- ▶ Perhaps the best aspect of certification programs is that they allow individuals to control their own career. Whether one's current employer supports staff certification or not, individuals can develop themselves and take control of their knowledge, skills, and future by becoming certified in their field.

Source: NAHAM Candidate Guide to Certification

Benefits of Certification

- ▶ Improve financial performance by raising revenue cycle staff knowledge
- ▶ Recognize staff knowledge and expertise
- ▶ Decrease turnover
- ▶ Increase inter-departmental cooperation
- ▶ Heighten staff confidence and work satisfaction

Creating a career path

- ▶ Fifteen years ago
 - ▶ Clerk
 - ▶ Supervisor
 - ▶ Manager

- ▶ Ten years ago
 - ▶ Registrar
 - ▶ Business Services Clerk
 - ▶ Patient Access Trainer
 - ▶ Supervisor
 - ▶ Manager

Creating a career path

- ▶ Today
 - ▶ Patient Access Services Associate I, II, and III
 - ▶ Patient Accounts Representative I, II, and III
 - ▶ Patient Access Services/Patient Accounts Lead
 - ▶ Benefits Specialist
 - ▶ Denials Specialist
 - ▶ Financial Navigator
 - ▶ Revenue Cycle Analyst
 - ▶ Revenue Cycle Trainer
 - ▶ Supervisor
 - ▶ Manager

Our Results

- ▶ 12 students enrolled in first semester
 - ▶ Hospital/clinic
 - ▶ staff/supervisors
 - ▶ scheduling/admitting/billing
- ▶ Many sat for/plan to sit for certification exams
- ▶ Immediate feedback that course content was applicable in real settings

Lessons learned

- ▶ One semester might be too short
- ▶ More pre-reading and independent work should be assigned
- ▶ Case study assignment
 - ▶ Too much freedom was given
 - ▶ Need more examples and more specific guidelines
- ▶ Content development is time intensive. Do not underestimate the commitment required
- ▶ Working with the college provided freedom to address issues the hospital wasn't ready for

Recap: Create your vision

- ▶ Identify the type of program that will work for you: Internally developed content, Purchased content, Degree program
- ▶ Do the math: Recruitment/turnover costs, Salary expense, Content license, etc.
- ▶ Revise your org structure: Do you need new positions? New job titles?
- ▶ Work with HR to: Revise job descriptions, Set compensation levels
- ▶ Find your champion(s): you will likely need allies in HR, administration/executive leadership, and among your team

Planning checklist

- ▶ Network with peers & enlist supporters
- ▶ Identify opportunities for collaboration with community partners
- ▶ When you meet with university/college representatives:
 - ▶ State the case for change
 - ▶ Anticipate questions about
 - ▶ Student base
 - ▶ Curriculum
 - ▶ Faculty
- ▶ Work with HR to revise job descriptions

Questions?

Nicole Fountain, CRCE-I, CHAM

Executive Director, Patient Access and Revenue Integrity

University of Chicago Medicine

Phone: 773-834-5895

Email: nicole.fountain@uchospitals.edu