



# Board of Medical Specialty Coding & Compliance

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Candidate Handbook for the  
Home Care Coding Specialist-Diagnosis (HCS-D)



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## Introduction

Congratulations on your decision to earn one of the Board of Medical Specialty Coding & Compliance's certifications: the Home Care Coding Specialist - Diagnosis (HCS-D) credential. HCS-D certification can provide additional professional recognition and personal rewards.

This handbook is designed to help guide candidates through the Board of Medical Specialty Coding & Compliance's (BMSC) certification process, which we've defined with the following steps:

1. Learning about the HCS-D certification
2. Determining if you are ready to take the Home Care Coding Specialist - Diagnosis exam
3. Preparing for the exam, using appropriate study materials
4. Registering for the exam
5. Test day
6. After the examination
7. Maintaining your certification

## Organization Mission and Philosophy

BMSC is the premier provider of specialty certification, education and training for coders, clinicians and compliance professionals across the home health, physician and compliance fields.

We are dedicated to creating and advocating a career ladder for these professional through multiple layers of education, certification and training.

Since being established in 2003, thousands of candidates have taken the BMSC exams across the United States and beyond.

Our exams are created by coders for coders. They are skills-based exams that focus on your ability to do the job. We gladly welcome these skilled coders into our certification circle.

## A Quick Look at the Process

Home care coders who feel they have advanced beyond basic coding (based on their daily work skills) should strongly consider taking the HCS-D exam. Candidates must have a high school diploma or equivalent and **we recommend at least two years of home care coding before trying for the HCS-D certification**. For more information on this subject, turn to Eligibility and Qualifications on page 7 of this handbook.

### To apply

**Web:** Download a form at [www.medicalspecialtycoding.com/pdf/BMSCgenregform.pdf](http://www.medicalspecialtycoding.com/pdf/BMSCgenregform.pdf)

**Phone:** 1-800-897-4509

**Fax:** 1-301-287-2535

**Visit:** the BMSC booth at numerous conferences

**Mail:** Fill out the registration form at the back of this handbook and send to:  
Two Washingtonian Center, 9737 Washingtonian Blvd., Suite 100, Gaithersburg, MD 20878

### Where can I take the exam?

**At conferences:** Visit [www.medicalspecialtycoding.com](http://www.medicalspecialtycoding.com) for current offerings.

**Online:** HCS-D exams are available online so you have an option for taking an exam in your office. Please check the BMSC website for more information on our Proctor Nomination Form, or turn to page 29 of this handbook.

### Registration fees

The fee for the HCS-D certification exam is \$259. We partner with the Association of Home Care Coders and other groups during the year to offer the exam. Some of those partner organizations may offer the test to members at a discount. The fee for the HCS-D recertification exam is \$149. Registration fees cover examination registration costs, administration and credential management. **The cost of the exam also includes a FREE retake of each exam if you do not pass on the first try.**

### At the exam

Bring your books!! You must bring a current ICD-9-CM manual with you to the exam location. The passing grade is 80% correct for both the certifying and recertification exam.

### Candidates who pass the exam

Once you pass the exam, you are a certified home care coder. To maintain certification, you will need to:

1. Complete 10 CEUs within 12 months of taking your exam. For information on BMSC CEUs or how to submit and request CEU approval, go to page 17 of this handbook.
2. In the second year of your certification, you will sit for a recertification exam that tests code changes in the 18-24 months since you first took your exam. This exam is much shorter than the certification exam, is allotted 90 minutes and is an objective test.

Maintenance of the credential continues in this fashion on an alternating yearly basis.

**Candidates who don't pass on their first attempt are allowed to retake the exam again for free.**

### Interested in Learning More?

**Email:** [info@medicalspecialtycoding.com](mailto:info@medicalspecialtycoding.com)

**Phone:** 1-800-897-4509

**Fax:** 1-301-287-2535

**Mail:** Two Washingtonian Center  
9737 Washingtonian Blvd., Suite 100  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

**Web:** [www.medicalspecialtycoding.com](http://www.medicalspecialtycoding.com)

# 1 About HCS-D Certification

Home care coders who successfully pass the certification examination will be certified by BMSC and will earn their Home Care Coding Specialist - Diagnosis (HCS-D) credential.

Certified coders are in high demand for their ability to ensure appropriate reimbursement while reducing risk of liability. We are always looking for your advice on other credentials to consider. Please email us at [info@medicalspecialtycoding.com](mailto:info@medicalspecialtycoding.com) with your recommendations.

## Benefits

BMSC exams are the only ones developed for coders by coders. The HCS-D exam tests skills and shows your proficiency. In a June 2006 survey by BMSC, we discovered that 1 in 5 of our surveyed certified coders had received a raise or bonus after certification!!

HCS-D certified coders are considered leaders in the industry because they:

- Utilize their specialty knowledge and experience to better interact with clinicians and providers
- Understand both basic and more advanced coding principles and guidelines
- Ensure their providers receive appropriate reimbursement
- Provide direction and instruction to less experienced coders in the workplace
- Demonstrate their coding skills daily

Your coding credential is a demonstration of your coding proficiency. As you become more experienced in the practical requirements of home care coding, HCS-D certification can provide additional professional and personal recognition and reward.

As the importance of accurate and specific diagnosis coding increases in the home health setting, those with demonstrated proficiency will significantly increase the value they bring to their agencies. Certified coders are generally more highly compensated and receive greater advancement opportunities. For job applicants, certification can provide a competitive advantage, and providers are increasingly requiring coding certification as a condition of employment.



## 2 Determining if you are ready to take the HCS-D Exam

### Eligibility and Qualifications

The HCS-D exam assesses your proficiency in coding specifically for home care.

To be eligible to sit for the Home Care Coding Specialist-Diagnosis (HCS-D) certification examination, candidates must have earned a high school diploma from a United States high school, or have an equivalent background.

Coding knowledge is not necessarily defined by years of experience, education or other credentials, therefore BMSC does not put a number on the years of experience a coder must have in order to sit for our exams.

**Our most successful candidates usually have at least two years coding in home care. HCS-D certified coders must be able to apply codes and coding concepts in a testing situation. This is not an exam where you can sit through an education class, then take and pass the exam. It is a skills-based exam, which is why we recommend several years of coding experience. The test may include scenarios with multiple conditions, aftercare situations, co-morbidities and complications, for example.**

If you believe that your combination of education, experience and expertise qualifies you as a home care coding specialist, then we invite you to sit for the home care specialty certification examination.

BMSC does not discriminate against any applicant. All applicants for examinations will be judged only on published criteria for eligibility.

### Examination Philosophy

BMSC exams are designed to test the day-in, day-out coding skills of the professional coder. As a result, many coding scenarios appear on the exam, as well as the crucial subject areas of coding conventions and guidelines. This is the only nationwide certification credential created by coders for coders. Our goal isn't to stump you with trick questions on procedures you will likely never see, but rather to ensure – for you and for your employer – that you have, in fact, achieved proficiency in home care coding.

The HCS-D examination focuses on the critical diagnosis coding and billing issues specific to home care:

- Most frequently billed home health conditions and proper assignment of PPS case-mix diagnoses
- Accurately assigning V code status before and after Medicare's October 1, 2003 compliance deadline
- Conventions and guidelines for home health diagnosis coding (e.g., manifestation codes)
- Correct usage of combination codes
- Correct assignment of primary (M0230) and secondary (M0240) codes, as well as M0246
- Other topics include ICD-9-CM code sequencing and knowledge of medical terminology

### Applying for the Exam

To begin your process, review the information in this handbook. If you feel you are ready to begin this process and have met BMSC's recommended minimum requirements, submit an application for the HCS-D certification examination. Application forms are available at the BMSC website and in this handbook. We will also mail applications, if so desired.

Any candidate applying via mail is encouraged to send the application via registered, trackable mail. Please allow two to four weeks of processing time from the time you mail the application.

However you apply, you will receive an e-mail confirmation from BMSC that your registration has been received.

# 3 Preparing for HCS-D certification

## Study Process and Materials

Because the HCS-D exams are skill-based, a coder doing excellent work every day should be prepared for the exam without the need for extra studying. We do, however, recognize people's desires for reference materials to brush up on skills and concepts.

You will find HCS-D specific study outlines on the BMSC website to help aide candidates in seeing what topics will specifically be addressed. In addition, on our website we offer several skill-based questions similar to ones that will be on the test. Download these and see how you do!

We publish various study resources, including a study guide specific to HCS-D certification with dozens of examples and sample questions. In conjunction with our publishing partner, DecisionHealth®, we offer a larger resource book that follows the ICD-9 chapters and also offers sample questions. We may also offer other study resources, such as on-your-own audio study guides and reference sheets. Please check out website at [www.medicalspecialtycoding.com](http://www.medicalspecialtycoding.com) and go to the Study Materials area for more information. The website can also direct you to skill questions online.

## Test Format

The HCS-D exam is 2.5 hours long. This exam does include scenarios, and you will be asked to code them as you would on the job. This test is multiple choice. The questions are weighted, according to difficulty.

All BMSC exams are "open book." **You must bring the following resources with you to the HCS-D exam to have all the resources needed to take the test:**

- Photo Identification
- Current ICD-9-CM book

While sticky notes attached to, or writing inside of, any of the above books is allowed, loose leaf papers are not allowed. You may not share reference books with other test takers and extra copies of the above books will not be provided. Please bring extra writing utensils you may need. Scrap paper will be provided for candidates to use during the exam. A passing grade is 80% correct or higher.

## Recertification Exams

The recertification exam is a 10-question objective test, which only tests on code changes in the 18-24 months since you have earned your original certification. Candidates have 90 minutes to take this exam. The questions are weighted, according to difficulty.

The resources allowed for the recertification exam are the same as those allowed for the certifying exam. A passing grade is 80% correct or higher.



# 4 Registering for the HCS-D examination

## Fees

**Initial Registration Fee for Certifying Exam – \$259.00**

**CEU renewal application and Submission Fee - \$79.00\***

**Registration Fee for Recertification Exam – \$149.00**

Registration fee covers examination administration and credential management.

\*CEU application and Submission Fee is required to maintain your credential. This fee is assessed in the years when you are not applying for recertification.

Registration forms can be found at the back of this handbook.

## Selecting a Testing Location

### Taking the Test at an Event

Many candidates like to attend conferences or educational events to ensure that they have the knowledge needed to take a BMSC certification exam. While BMSC encourages this practice, please keep in mind that no conference is designed to train you to pass a given test. However, many conferences, especially the *Home Health Coding Summit*, will provide the latest information on health care coding.

The BMSC exam is a separate registration (and fee) from any conference.

To register for a certification exam at a conference, simply visit the Events Page on our website to view current offerings, click on the conference you are interested in, and register for BOTH the conference and the exam. You may also complete the exam registration form in the back of this handbook and fax it to 1-301-287-2535.

### Taking the Test in Your Office

Many coders have trouble finding the time and money to attend conferences or CEU events throughout the year. That is why we have developed the Individual Proctoring Protocol. This process allows you to take the exam online at your office when and where it is convenient for you and your proctor.

Candidates must first select a qualified individual proctor, then complete and return the Proctor Nomination Form along with your exam registration to BMSC for approval. BMSC will send your proctor a valid username and password for when you take your exam.

A qualified proctor should be an impartial test administrator. Your proctor can be a trustworthy person (he or she does not have to be a professional coder) who is willing to ensure standard and fair test conditions and:

1. Is not a family member or related to you
2. Does not report to you
3. Will not accept compensation for proctoring services.

Upon receipt of the examination, the proctor will:

1. Schedule a time and place for the candidate to sit for the examination (You do NOT have to make BMSC aware of exam appointment date)

2. Review the test instructions and parameters (time and resource limitations, etc.)
3. Co-sign, with the candidate, the Statement of Compliance, and
4. Administer the examination according to the agreed-to instructions.

The online exam is timed. At the end of the allotted exam time, the exam will shut down and your exam will be transmitted to BMSC.

### **Special testing accommodations**

Please contact BMSC if you have a situation that might require special testing accommodations.

## 5 Test Day

Candidates taking the test at an event should report to the testing room 30 minutes before the exam start time to be signed in and have your reference materials checked. A government-issued photo ID is required for sign-in. This ID should include your photo and recent signature. Pencils and scratch paper will be provided (onsite only). Once you enter the testing room, you may not leave until the exam has finished.

Before the exam is administered, the proctor will review the rules to follow while the test is in progress.

The HCS-D certification exam is 2.5 hours long; the HCS-D recertification exam is 90 minutes long. There are no scheduled bathroom breaks during the exam. If a candidate leaves for the bathroom, the break is allowed, but time does not stop.

### Unallowed behavior

Candidates who partake in any of the following types of behavior will be dismissed from the test-taking venue and the scores will not be allowed. Examples of misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- Using electronic communication equipment (e.g., PDAs, calculators, cell phones)
- Giving or receiving help during the examination
- Committing fraud by attempting to take the exam for someone else
- Using notes or aids that are not allowed
- Attempting to copy or remove test materials
- Engaging in abusive, disturbing or uncooperative behavior.

### Testing Issues

Occasionally, testing irregularities, including but not limited to administrative errors, unauthorized availability of test content or disruptions in test administration, occur and must be dealt with.

If a testing issue occurs, BMSC will perform an investigation. BMSC may opt to score the test or cancel the test score. When appropriate, BMSC will give affected test-takers the opportunity to retake the exam as soon as possible and free of charge. Affected candidates will be told the reason for the cancellation of their test and options for retest. Appeals processes do not apply to testing irregularities.



## 6 After the examination

### Successful candidates:

- Become a HCS-D certified coder!
- Receive a certificate of recognition of their status as a Home Care Coding Specialist – Diagnosis.
- Receive a credential lapel pin.
- Will be listed as a Home Care Coding Specialist-Diagnosis in our Directory of Credential Holders at [www.medicalspecialtycoding.com](http://www.medicalspecialtycoding.com).
- May, at their discretion, have their supervisor officially notified of their achievement by the Executive Director.

### Unsuccessful candidates:

- Receive an invitation to retake the HCS-D examination one additional time, for no additional fee, within 60 days of their receipt of the performance report.
- May take the exam for the third time at a discounted price as long as proper registration form is submitted within 30 days of 2nd attempt. Discounted registration form may be requested via phone, email or downloaded from our website.

### Feedback on Your Experience

You will receive an email asking you to complete a Post-Exam survey. Your answers to this survey will help us gauge how well we, and the exam, are serving you and how well you feel you were tested on coding conventions. We encourage you to fill out this form.

### Release of Information

All test results are released directly to you and will not be released to anyone else. If you are taking the test at an event, please allow four to six weeks for notification of your results. If you are taking the test online, your results are provided to you at the completion of the exam.

All candidates who become certified coders may have their names published in a newsletter, website or other public forum.

Information on your exam and scores will not be released to an outside party.

Exam scores may not be given through the phone due to identification security issues.

### Revoking Certification

Certification may be revoked if any of the following scenarios are met:

- The certified coder had supplied false information or supporting documentation.
- The certified coder has engaged in inappropriate conduct during the exam administration or after.
- The certified coder fails to comply with BMSC's Code of Conduct on page 21 of this handbook.



## 7 Maintaining your Certification

Congratulations! You've become certified and have proven to the world that you know your specialty. Your certification is important to you, and it's time to think about the maintenance process. Because BMSC's exams focus on skill-based testing, skill maintenance is built into a revolving process:

Year 1: Initial Certification

Year 2: Submit CEUs for Renewal

Year 3: Recertification

Year 4: Submit CEUs for Renewal

And so on...

In the first year after your initial exam, you will need to maintain your credential by earning 10 Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

If you earned your certification two years (or more) ago and have already renewed your certification by earning 10 CEUs, then the next step is to sit for your recertification exam.

### Renewing Your Credential

To maintain your certification as a Home Care Coding Specialist-Diagnosis, BMSC requires that you complete 10 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) during a renewal year.

Your education **MUST** be specific to home care issues and ICD-9 coding.

We will not accept CEUs that apply to physician coding (CPT, HCPCS) or general information management CEUs unless they apply across a general coding spectrum.

Your completed Application for Renewal with all required documentation of your continuing education is due with a payment of \$79.00 to BMSC on or before the anniversary of your certification (renewal date) that appears on your HCS-D certificate. BMSC will send you reminder emails that your renewal date is nearing.

Even if you earn CEUs at a BMSC-approved education event, you must submit a renewal application, certificate of attendance and applicable fees.

Please Note: Do not submit CEUs to BMSC as you earn them. Your CEU and supporting documentation should be sent together before your certification anniversary date.

CEU applications and payments should be sent to:

Attn: Registrar  
Board of Medical Specialty Coding & Compliance  
9737 Washingtonian Blvd., Suite 100  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

## How to earn CEUs

There are three ways you can earn CEUs:

Educational Events

Publications

Teaching or Presenting

### **Educational events (seminars, conferences, workshops, audio seminars, etc.)**

A list of events (both live conferences and audio/web seminars) that have been pre-approved for CEUs can be found on the Events Page of our website.

PLEASE NOTE: Videos, audio CDs, online education and similar formats are considered to be events for purposes of CEU calculation and documentation requirements.

### **Home Care Coding Educational Events**

BMSC awards 1 CEU per 1 educational hour attended.

CEUs are awarded for educational content only, not for social/networking events, meals or general sessions.

To submit pre-approved CEUs, simply include them in the Continuing Education Record portion of the Application for Certification Renewal. You only need to provide the activity date, name, format, indicate its pre-approval status and the number of earned CEUs. Please include a copy of your Certificate of Attendance with your Renewal Application.

To submit non-pre-approved CEUs, please include the following documentation for each event:

- Copy of the course agenda, including course objectives and name of sponsoring organization
- Name of presenter/s (include credentials, if applicable)
- Number of hours dedicated to coding education
- Copy of your certificate of attendance or completion

Your renewal application is due by the anniversary of your certification date (date on your certificate).

## Publications

Subscribers to *Diagnosis Coding Pro for Home Health* can now earn 12 HCS-D CEUs annually. Here is how the process will work for the *Diagnosis Coding Pro for Home Health* subscriber:

1. Subscriber will access the link to the online CEU quiz through their actual newsletter (.pdf version of the newsletter will have the link activated for easy click-through; paper version of the newsletter will have the link available in the credit box.)
2. Subscriber will log-in to Online Quiz system with his/her *Diagnosis Coding Pro for Home Health* site UserID/Password.
3. Subscriber will click on the link of the quiz he/she wants to take. For example, the link will say "CEU Quiz for March 2009 Issue".
4. Subscriber will take the five question quiz, which will be all multiple choice questions. Once the Subscriber clicks on the "Submit Quiz" button, the computer will automatically grade the Subscriber's quiz. If the Subscriber passes the quiz, a Certificate of Completion will be emailed to the email address that the Subscriber has provided. If the Subscriber does not pass the quiz,

the computer will allow the Subscriber to retake the quiz again. Per BMSC/DH requirements, subscriber must pass the quiz with a 70% or higher in order to earn 1 CEU towards your credential maintenance.

### **Teaching and Presenting**

Developing, presenting and/or teaching relevant content will be approved for double-weighted CEU credit based on the event CEU rate on a case-by-case basis by BMSC. Please submit the following to BMSC to have your presentation approved for CEUs:

Please submit the following:

- Curriculum outline
- Resources used in the presentation
- Brief synopsis of the educational event (date, time frame, audience, etc.)
- The entire presentation/teaching content that was given to students

### **Recertification**

Recertification examinations will test your knowledge of coding and relevant clinical, reimbursement, coding conventions and guidelines, changes affecting home care since your original certification date (or your last recertification date).

The recertification exam is a short objective exam. You will have 90 minutes to complete the exam.

As with your original certification examination, you must pass your recertification examination with a score of 80% or higher.

The cost of the HCS-D recertification exam is \$149 or \$129 for AHCC members. If you have not received an email from BMSC approximately three months prior to your recertification date (see your certificate for the month and date), please notify us at [info@medicalspecialtycoding.com](mailto:info@medicalspecialtycoding.com), in case our email records are out-of-date.

As with your initial certification examination, you may opt to take your recertification test online or at a pre-approved conference event. If opting to take your recertification test online, you must nominate a proctor. Your proctor may NOT be a relative and also may NOT report to you on the job. Your proctor MUST be present when you sit for your examination. See Proctor Nomination Form on page 29 of this handbook.

The same proctoring policies will be enforced, and all applicants must adhere to examination pre-registration procedures.

Recertification examinations must be completed and returned to BMSC before your 2nd (4th, 6th, etc.) anniversary date. Recertification candidates who do not pass on their first attempt may re-take the recertification examination a second time within 90 days of receipt of their results letter at no additional cost.

Upon successful recertification, credentialed coders will receive a gold seal — indicating the year of recertification — to be placed on their HCS-D certificate.



# Code of Conduct

## Introduction

The Board of Medical Specialty Coding & Compliance's (BMSC) Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct (Ethics Code) consists of a statement of underlying principles and specific Ethical Standards. The General Principles are goals that we aspire to and are guides to Professional Coders striving for the highest ideals in BMSC. The General Principles are not themselves rules, they should be considered by Professional Coders in arriving at an ethical course of action. They are also statements of a Professional Coders' obligation to maintain the very highest standards of competence morality and dignity. The Ethical Standards establish more detailed guidelines for conduct as coders. Most of the Ethical Standards are written broadly, in order to apply to Professional Coders in varied roles. The Ethical Standards are not exhaustive. The fact that an Ethical Standard does not specifically address a given conduct does not mean that the conduct is necessarily either ethical or unethical.

Members of the profession are responsible for maintaining and promoting ethical standards and practices within their profession and in their interactions with other healthcare professionals. BMSC-certified coders are expected to uphold these standards, the objectives of BMSC and abide by BMSC bylaws. Actions that violate the standards of the Ethics Code may lead to withdrawal of the certification. In addition, when notified of a violation, BMSC reserves the right to report a Professional Coder to an employer or appropriate governmental agency.

This Ethics Code applies only to Professional Coders' activities that are part of their educational or professional roles as coders. Areas covered include but are not limited to the practice of coding; teaching; supervision of trainees; public service; policy development; organizational consulting; testimony; program design and evaluation; and administration. This Ethics Code applies to these activities across a variety of contexts, such as in person, postal, telephone, internet, and other electronic transmissions. These activities shall be distinguished from the purely private conduct of coders, which is not outlined in the Ethics Code.

The modifiers used in some of the standards of this Ethics Code (e.g., reasonably, appropriate, potentially) are included in the standards when they would (1) allow professional judgment on the part of Professional Coders, (2) eliminate injustice or inequality that would occur without the modifier, (3) ensure applicability across the broad range of activities conducted by coders, or (4) guard against a set of rigid rules that might be quickly outdated. As used in this Ethics Code, the term reasonable means the prevailing professional judgment of Professional Coders engaged in similar activities in similar circumstances, given the knowledge the Professional Coder had or should have had at the time.

In the process of making decisions regarding their professional behavior, Professional Coders must consider this Ethics Code in addition to applicable laws. In applying the Ethics Code to their professional work, Professional Coders may consider other materials and guidelines that have been adopted or endorsed by professional coding organizations and the dictates of their own conscience, as well as consult with others within the field. If this Ethics Code establishes a higher standard of conduct than is required by law, Professional Coders should meet the higher ethical standard.

Professional Coders are committed to increasing accurate documentation, correct coding, and proper billing. They are committed to the growth of professional knowledge and to the use of such knowledge to improve the legal and financial situation of medical practitioners or employers. This Ethics Code provides a common set of principles and standards upon which Professional Coders build their professional work.

This Ethics Code is intended to provide specific standards to cover most situations encountered by Professional Coders. The development of a set of ethical standards for coders work-related conduct requires a personal commitment and lifelong effort to act ethically; to encourage ethical behavior by employers, employees, and colleagues; and to consult with others concerning ethical problems.

**General Principles**

General Principles, as opposed to Ethical Standards, are an aspiration, something we strive toward. Their intent is to guide and inspire coders toward the very highest ethical ideals of the profession. General Principles represent the underlying thoughts and ideals of our Ethical Standards.

**Principle A: Attitude**

Professional Coders strive to benefit those with whom they work and take care to do no harm. In their professional actions, Professional Coders seek to safeguard the welfare and rights of those with whom they work and other affected persons and entities. When conflicts occur between obligations or concerns, they attempt to resolve these conflicts in a responsible fashion. Because a Professional Coder's professional judgments and actions may affect the lives of others, they are alert to and guard against personal, financial, social, organizational, or political factors that might lead to misuse of their influence.

**Principle B: Duty**

Professional Coders establish relationships of trust with those with whom they work. They are aware of their professional responsibilities to society and to the specific situations in which they work. Professional Coders uphold professional conduct, clarify their professional obligations, accept appropriate responsibility for their behavior, and seek to manage conflicts of interest that could lead to exploitation or harm. Professional Coders consult with, refer to, or cooperate with other professionals to the extent needed to serve the best interests of those with whom they work. They are concerned about the ethical compliance of their employers and colleagues' professional conduct.

**Principle C: Integrity**

Professional Coders seek to promote accuracy, honesty, and truthfulness in billing and coding. In these activities Professional Coders do not steal, cheat, or knowingly engage in fraud, subterfuge, or intentional misrepresentation of fact. Professional Coders strive to maintain their integrity and to avoid unwise or unclear commitments.

**Principle D: Respect**

Professional Coders respect the dignity and worth of all people, and the rights of individuals to privacy and confidentiality. Professional Coders are aware that special safeguards may be necessary to protect the rights and welfare of patients, clients and employers. Professional Coders are aware of and respect cultural, individual differences including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status and consider these factors when working with members of such groups.

## Ethical Standards

### Resolving Ethical Issues

- **Misuse of Work**  
If Professional Coders learn of misuse or misrepresentation of their work, they take reasonable steps to correct or minimize the misuse.
- **Conflicts Between Ethics and Law**  
If a Professional Coders ethical responsibilities conflict with law, regulations, or payor policy, Professional Coders will take steps to resolve the conflict. If the conflict is not solved, Professional Coders will abide by the law, regulations, or other legal authority.
- **Conflicts Between Ethics and Organizational Demands**  
If the requirements of an organization for which they are working conflict with this Ethics Code, Professional Coders will make every attempt to resolve the conflict and still follow the Ethics Code.

### Competence

- **Boundaries of Competence**  
Professional Coders will provide services and teach only within the scope of their competence, based on their education, training, study, or professional experience.
- **Lifelong learning**  
Professional Coders will work to develop and maintain their competence.

### Human Relations

- **Discrimination**  
In their work-related activities, Professional Coders do not engage in unfair discrimination based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or any basis proscribed by law.
- **Sexual Harassment**  
Professional Coders do not engage in sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, that occurs in connection with the Professional Coder's activities or and that either (1) is unwelcome, is offensive, or creates a hostile workplace or educational environment, and that (2) is sufficiently severe or intense to be abusive to a reasonable person in the context. Sexual harassment can consist of a single intense or severe act or of multiple persistent or pervasive acts.
- **Other Harassment**  
Professional Coders do not knowingly engage in behavior that is harassing or demeaning to others due to factors such as those persons' age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, or socioeconomic status.
- **Avoiding Harm**  
Professional Coders take reasonable steps to avoid harming their clients or employers or others with whom they work.
- **Conflict of Interest**  
Professional Coders will not take on a professional role when personal, professional, legal, financial, or other interests that could reasonably be expected to (1) impair their objectivity, competence, or effectiveness or (2) expose the organization to harm or exploitation.  
Professional coders will not accept any gift, gratuity, payment or other inducement to from anyone that would call into question the objectivity and/or validity of their work product.

## Privacy and Confidentiality

- **Maintaining Confidentiality**  
Professional Coders have a primary obligation and take reasonable precautions to protect confidential information within the limits of law or established by institutional rules.
- **Minimizing Intrusions on Privacy**  
Professional Coders discuss confidential information obtained in their work only for appropriate professional purposes and only with persons clearly concerned with such matters.
- **Disclosures**  
Professional Coders may disclose confidential information with the appropriate consent of the individual client/patient, or another legally authorized person on behalf of the client/patient unless prohibited by law. Professional Coders disclose confidential information without the consent of the individual only as mandated by law, or where permitted by law for a valid purpose.

## Advertising and Other Public Statements

- **Avoidance of False or Deceptive Statements**  
Public statements include but are not limited to paid or unpaid advertising, certification applications, other credentialing applications, brochures, printed matter, directory listings, personal resumes or public comments such as print or electronic transmission, statements in legal proceedings, lectures and public oral presentations, and published materials. Professional Coders do not make false, deceptive, or fraudulent statements concerning their training, experience, or competence; their credentials; or their institutional or association affiliations.
- **Media Presentations**  
When Professional Coders provide public advice or comment verbally, in print, by the internet, or other electronic transmission, they take precautions to ensure that statements are based on their professional knowledge, training, or experience, are in accord with law or policy, and are ethical.

## Record Keeping and Fees

- **Fees and Financial Arrangements**  
A Professional Coder shall make sure all their charges are clearly stated in an agreement specifying compensation and billing arrangements. All fee practices will be consistent with law and will not misrepresent costs or charges.
- **Accuracy in Reports to Payors and Funding Sources**  
In their reports to payors for services and in coding and billing activities, coders shall take reasonable steps to ensure accurate reporting.

## Education and Training

- **Accuracy in Teaching**  
Professional Coders take reasonable steps to ensure that course materials are accurate regarding the subject matter to be covered, basis for evaluating progress, and the nature of course experiences. When teaching or training, Professional Coders will present all information accurately, without bias and based upon reputable sources.
- **Student Disclosure**  
Professional Coders will take every possible step to ensure the privacy of any grades or other student information and will establish a timely and specific process for providing feedback to students.
- **Standard Tests**  
Should Professional Coders have access to any standard tests or certification exams, they will keep such information confidential and not release confidential information concerning the tests, the answers or any information concerning the scoring or development of the test or exam. Discussion of items pertaining to and included in the BMSC tests is permitted for the sole purpose of test development as directed by BMSC.

## DecisionHealth Privacy Policy Statement

DecisionHealth is committed to protecting your privacy and hold our relationship with users in the highest regard. This policy describes the ways that personally identifiable and anonymous information about our online users, event registrants and print subscribers is gathered, our information sharing practices, and how online users and print subscribers may request changes to the way this information is shared.

### Personally Identifiable Information We Collect and Use

#### Information Collection

DecisionHealth® is the sole owner of the information collected on [www.medicalspecialtycoding.com](http://www.medicalspecialtycoding.com). DecisionHealth® collects information from our users at several different points on our website.

#### Registration

In order to use certain areas of this website, a user must first complete a registration form. During registration a user may be required to give contact information (such as name and email address). We use this information to contact the user about services on our site for which he/she has expressed interest. Some information is optional while other information may be required. In some cases a unique identifier (such as, username and password) may be required in order to obtain further benefits from our website.

#### Information Use

Our primary goal in collecting personal information is to provide you with the best and most useful content and services. In addition, we may use the information collected from you to contact you from time to time regarding our products and/or services. At all times you have the right to request that we cease contacting you by 'opting out' of our communications.

#### Cookies

Like other websites, DecisionHealth sites use cookies to improve your experience with our online content. For instance, we may use a cookie to identify members so they don't have to re-enter their email address and password when they come to our sites. We use both session ID cookies and persistent cookies which enable us to track and target the interests of our users to improve the content on our site. Usage of cookies tells us nothing about who you are and is no way linked to any personally identifiable information. By adjusting your settings on your browser, you may elect not to allow cookies to be collected. However, it is likely that some areas of the site will not function properly if you do so.

#### Log Files

Like most standard website servers we use log files. This includes internet protocol (IP) addresses, browser type, internet service provider (ISP), referring/exit pages, platform type, date/time stamp, and number of clicks to analyze trends, administer the site, track user's movement in the aggregate, and gather broad demographic information for aggregate use. IP addresses, etc. are not linked to personally identifiable information.

#### Third Party Advertising

Some of our advertisers use third-party companies to serve their advertisements on our sites and, in some cases, in our HTML-formatted newsletters. Often, these third-party advertising companies employ cookie and pixel tag technologies to measure the effectiveness of Web and email advertisements. We do not give any personally identifiable information to them as part of this relationship. Use of their tracking technology is subject to their own privacy policies.

## Sharing

### Legal Disclaimer

Though we make every effort to preserve user privacy, we may need to disclose personal information when required by law wherein we have a good-faith belief that such action is necessary to comply with a current judicial proceeding, a court order or legal process served on our website.

### Aggregate Information (non-personally identifiable)

We may share aggregated demographic information with our partners, third parties for marketing, promotional, and other purposes. This is not linked to any personally identifiable information.

### Links

Our websites may contain links to other sites. Please be aware that DecisionHealth is not responsible for the privacy practices of such other sites. We encourage our users to be aware when they leave our site and to read the privacy statements of each and every website that collects personally identifiable information. This privacy statement applies solely to information collected by this website.

### Surveys & Contests

We may provide you the opportunity to participate in contests or surveys on our site. Participation in these surveys or contests is completely voluntary and the user therefore has a choice whether or not to disclose this information. The requested information typically includes contact information (such as name and email address). Contact information will be used to notify the winners and award prizes. Anonymous Survey information will be used for purposes of monitoring or improving the use and satisfaction of this site. Users' personally identifiable information is not shared with third parties unless we give prior notice and choice. Though we may use an intermediary to conduct these surveys or contests, they may not use users' personally identifiable information for any secondary purposes.

### Changing Your Privacy Options

Update Your Registration Information

Update Your Newsletter Subscriptions

Opt-Out

### Notification of Changes

This Privacy Policy may be modified from time to time. If there is a material change in our privacy practices, we will post those changes to this privacy statement. If there is a significant change, we will indicate on our sites that our privacy practices have changed and provide a link to the new privacy statement.

### Questions

If users have any questions or suggestions regarding our privacy policy, you can contact us at:

DecisionHealth  
Two Washingtonian Center  
9737 Washingtonian Blvd., Suite 100  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Phone: 877-602-3835  
Fax: 301-816-8945



# EXAMINATION REGISTRATION FORM

## 1. CREDENTIAL EXAMINATION

- Home Care Coding Specialist Diagnosis \$299\*
- HCS-D Recertification Candidate \$189\*
- Certified Compliance Professional Physician \$259
- Home Care Clinical Specialist - OASIS-C \$299\*
- Specialty Coding Professional (SCP) \$259  
(Select specialty below)
- Advanced Coding Specialist (ACS) \$325  
(Select specialty below)
- AHCC Membership Price \$259 for HCS-D
- ICD-9 Basics Competency \$129
- CCP-P Recertification \$149
- AHCC Membership Price \$259 for HCS-O
- HCS-O Recertification \$189\*
- SCP Recertification \$149  
(Select specialty below)
- ACS Recertification \$229  
(Select specialty below)

<input type="checkbox"/> Anesthesia	<input type="checkbox"/> General Surgery	<input type="checkbox"/> Cardiology	<input type="checkbox"/> Obstetrics/Gynecology
<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation & Management Auditing (ACS only)	<input type="checkbox"/> Orthopedics	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> Pain Management
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Practice/Pediatrics	<input type="checkbox"/> Radiology	<input type="checkbox"/> Gastroenterology	<input type="checkbox"/> Urology

\*Includes membership fees for the Association of Home Care & Compliance

## 2. TESTING METHOD

- Onsite** ▶ Check the BMSC website for an updated list of exam opportunities and locations at [www.medicalspecialtycoding.com](http://www.medicalspecialtycoding.com) and indicate below ▼
- Online** ▶ Must also include Proctor Nomination form

City	State	Date	Conference Name

## 3. CANDIDATE INFORMATION (Please print or type)

**Company Address:** Check here  if you would like your exam results sent to your company address.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(as you would like it to appear on your certificate)

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
(required)

**Personal Information:** Check here  if you would like your exam results sent to your personal address.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(as you would like it to appear on your certificate)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. PAYMENT INFORMATION

**Check enclosed** [Registrar, BMSC (TIN 26-3622553)  
Please mail and fax Registration and PNF forms with check.]

**Charge my:**  VISA  MC  AmEx  Disc

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: You will receive an email confirmation once your payment is processed.



**Board of Medical Specialty Coding & Compliance**  
Two Washingtonian Center  
9737 Washingtonian Blvd., Ste 100  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878-7364  
**Fax:** 1-301-287-2535  
**Phone:** 1-800-897-4509

## Individual Proctoring Protocol (IPP) Process Overview

In order to preserve the integrity of the examination process, credential candidates who choose to take their qualifying examination at their office must first agree to comply with the Board of Medical Specialty Coding & Compliance's Individual Proctoring Protocol (IPP).

\*Please Note: if you choose to register for an exam at any conference, you do not need to fax a proctor nomination form to BMSC before the conference. Your examination will be proctored onsite, so there is no need to nominate a proctor.

Candidates must nominate a qualified individual proctor and complete and return the Proctor Nomination Form with the registration form to the Board for approval. BMSC will then forward instructions to administer the qualifying examination for the relevant credential to the approved proctor.

A qualified proctor should be an impartial test administrator. Examples of qualified proctors include colleagues, supervisors, clergy and other impartial individuals. An unacceptable proctor would be BMSC certified, anyone related to the candidate through marriage or blood, an employee of the candidate or someone who is compensated for proctoring duties.

### For Examinations Taken Online:

The proctor will:

1. Receive the UserID and Password for the candidate to use for the examination via email. This email will also include links to appropriate forms (proctor instructions and supporting documents) for candidates to use during the exam. Candidate will have 30 days from the time the proctor receives the login instructions to take the exam.
2. Schedule a time and place for candidate to sit for the examination.
3. Administer the examination according to instructions provided by BMSC.
4. Keep exam content confidential and not duplicate in any way.

As a credential candidate, you and the proctor must agree to abide by the requirements of the Individual Proctoring Protocol, and you understand that failure to comply with these requirements may result in your disqualification.

Questions or concerns about the IPP should be directed to:

Mail or Fax completed form to:

**Board of Medical Specialty Coding & Compliance** (Attn: Registrar)  
Two Washingtonian Center 9737 Washingtonian Blvd., Ste 100  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878-7364

**Fax:** 1-301-287-2535

**Phone:** 1-800-897-4509



Board of  
**Medical Specialty  
 Coding & Compliance**

# PROCTOR NOMINATION FORM

I, \_\_\_\_\_, a candidate for:

- ICD-9 Basics Competency**
- Home Care Coding Specialist – Diagnosis**
- Home Care Clinical Specialist – OASIS-C**
- Certified Compliance Professional Physician**
- Specialty Coding Professional (SCP)** \_\_\_\_\_
- Advanced Coding Specialist (ACS)** \_\_\_\_\_
- HCS-D Recertification**
- HCS-O Recertification**
- CCP-P Recertification**
- SCP Recertification** \_\_\_\_\_
- ACS Recertification** \_\_\_\_\_

hereby nominate the following individual to serve as proctor for my qualification examination, which I will take online:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Relationship of proctor to Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

**FAX OR MAIL TO:**

**Board of Medical Specialty  
 Coding & Compliance**  
 Two Washingtonian Center  
 9737 Washingtonian Blvd., Ste 100  
 Gaithersburg, MD 20878-7364  
**Fax:** 1-301-287-2535  
**Phone:** 1-800-897-4509

I hereby certify that the proctor I have nominated:

- Is NOT a relative by blood or marriage
- Is NOT a direct or indirect employee of the candidate
- Is NOT compensated in any way for fulfilling the duties of proctor

I hereby certify that the proctor I have nominated is aware of my request and has agreed to adhere to the testing protocol as outlined in the Individual Proctoring Protocol Process Overview.

Candidate Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Candidate Email \_\_\_\_\_





# APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION RENEWAL

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>(HCS-D) Home Care Coding Specialist – Diagnosis</b>       | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$129</b> (includes AHCC membership fees)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>(HCS-O) Home Care Clinical Specialist – OASIS-C</b>       | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$129</b> (includes AHCC membership fees)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>(CCP-P) Certified Compliance Professional Physician</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$79</b> <b>OR</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$99</b> (includes \$20 late fee)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>(SCP) Specialty Coding Professional</b> _____ (specialty) | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$79</b> <b>OR</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$99</b> (includes \$20 late fee)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>(ACS) Advanced Coding Specialist</b> _____ (specialty)    | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$99</b> <b>OR</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$119</b> (includes \$20 late fee) |

Name (as it appears on your certificate)	Credential/Specialty	Certification Date	
Title	Organization		
Street Address	City	State	Zip
Phone	Fax	Email (to receive annual reminders and tests status)	

Please see page 2 for instructions on submitting CEUs. Questions regarding the renewal process may be directed to one of our representatives at 800-897-4509, or via email at [info@medicals specialtycoding.com](mailto:info@medicals specialtycoding.com).

Continuing Education Units Record				
10 CEUs required for HCSD, CCPP and SCP renewal. 12 CEUs required for ACS renewal				
*Credential holders are responsible for submitting copies of CEU certificates to demonstrate CEUs earned.				
	Activity Date	Format	Pre-Approved	CEUs
Sample	January 5, 2011	Webinar	Yes	3
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

**Mail or Fax completed form to:**

**ATTN: Registrar**  
 Board of Medical Specialty Coding & Compliance  
 Two Washingtonian Center 9737 Washingtonian Blvd., Ste 100  
 Gaithersburg, MD 20878-7364  
 Fax: 1-301-287-2535

# Instructions on submitting Continuing Education Units

10 CEUs required for HCS-O, HCS-D, CCP-P and SCP renewal. 12 CEUs required for ACS renewal.

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## There are three ways you can earn CEUs:

### 1. Educational Events (seminars, workshops, audioseminars, etc.)

To submit CEUs for preapproved events, please include the following:

- Number of hours dedicated to coding education
- Copy of your certificate of attendance or completion

To submit CEUs for events NOT preapproved, please include the following:

- Copy of the course agenda, including course objectives and name of sponsoring organization
- Name of presenter/s (include credentials, if applicable)
- Copy of your certificate of attendance or completion (if given)
- Number of hours dedicated to coding education (see guidelines on how to calculate CEU amount)
  - General coding educational events BMSC awards 1 CEU per 2 hours of education
  - Relevant specialty educational events BMSC awards 1 CEU per 1 hour of education

### 2. Publications

Visit the BMSC website at [www.medicalspecialtycoding.com/renewal.aspx](http://www.medicalspecialtycoding.com/renewal.aspx) to see what publications are pre-approved for CEUs.

### 3. Teaching or Presenting

Developing, presenting and/or teaching relevant content will be approved for doubleweighted CEU credit based on the event CEU rate on a case by case basis by BMSC. Please submit the following to BMSC to have your presentation approved for CEUs:

- Resources used in the presentation
- Brief synopsis of the educational event (date, timeframe, audience, etc.)

## Payment Information:

**Check enclosed** [Registrar, BMSC (TIN 26-3622553)]

**Charge my:**  VISA  MC  AmEx  Disc

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

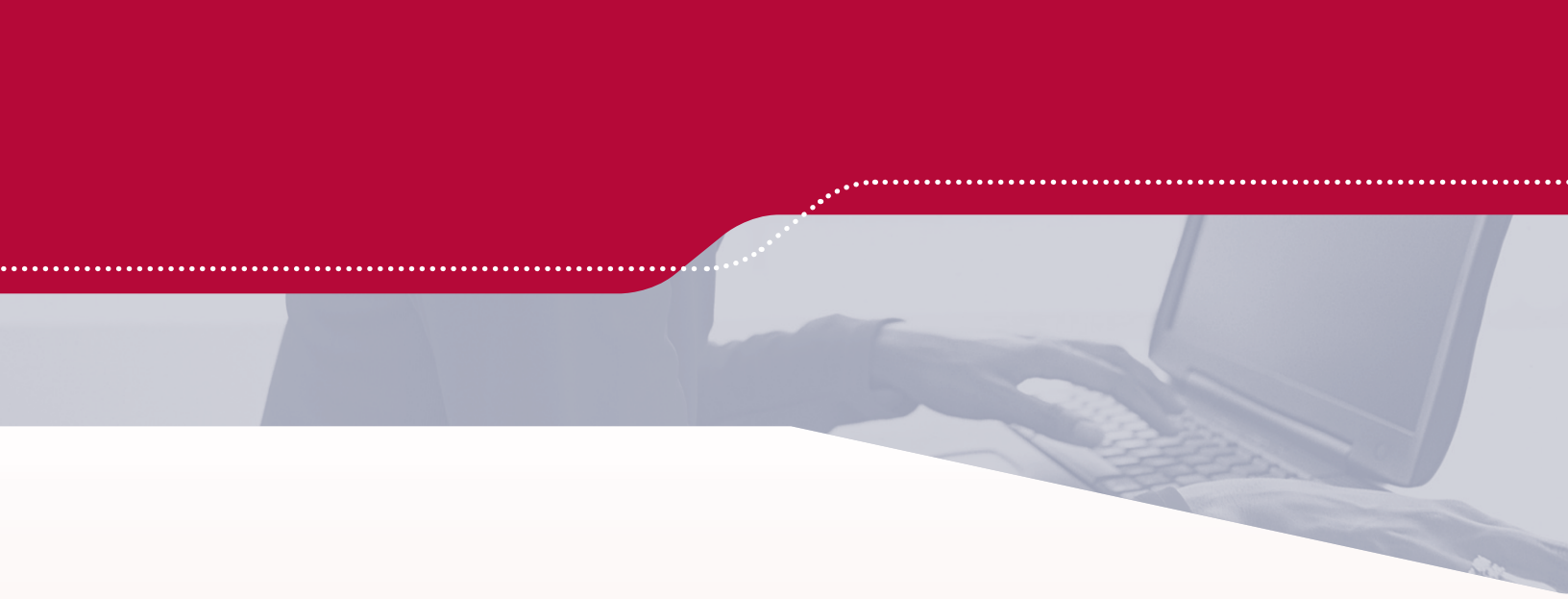
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: You will receive an email confirmation once your payment is processed.



### Mail or fax completed form to:

Attn: Registrar  
Board of Medical Specialty Coding & Compliance  
Two Washingtonian Center  
9737 Washingtonian Blvd., Ste. 100  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878-7364  
Fax: 1-301-287-2535



Board of  
**Medical Specialty  
Coding & Compliance**

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June 2011