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Career Fact Sheet

Health Information Technology Tools for the Career Counselor

Los Angeles and Orange Counties

This data was prepared for California Community Colleges and pertains to community college-level coursework as a resource for counselors to share with students.

The Bottom Line

Health Information Management (HIM) and Health Information Technology (Heath IT) are critical components of the 21st century healthcare system. These areas focus on acquiring, storing, retrieving, and using health information in medical settings. Health IT is expected to make patient care safer and more effective, save money, and improve the efficiency of the system. The healthcare industry as a whole will produce more job openings than any other industry through 2018.

Health IT Defined

Health Information Technology (Health IT) is the application of information processing involving both the computer hardware and software that deals with the storage, retrieval, sharing, and use of health care information, data and knowledge for communication and decision making. (Source: American Health Information Management Association.)

The primary occupation related to Health IT is Health Information Technician (HIT). However, health IT skills are valuable to a wide range of in-demand jobs within the healthcare industry – in patient care, administration, and other departments.

Regional Snapshot

From 2009 to 2014, Los Angeles and Orange counties are forecasted to have more than 1,500 job openings for Medical Records and Health Information Technicians. These positions earn an average hourly wage of $18.22 in Los Angeles and Orange counties.

	2009 Employment	2014 Employment	Growth Rate	New Job Growth	New Jobs plus Replacements
Medical Records & Health Information Technicians	5,880	6,595	12.2%	715	1,511

Source: EMSI Complete Employment, 4th Quarter 2009

Where do Health Information Technicians Work?

The table below shows the employment of Health Information Technicians in Los Angeles and Orange counties by industry. More detailed information is available in the Health IT environmental scan at www.coeccc.net/health.

Health-related Industry (NAICS code)	2009 Employment	2014 Employment	Growth Rate	New Job Growth
Offices of physicians (62-1111)	1,590	1,840	16%	250
General medical and surgical hospitals (62-2110)	1,510	1,625	8%	115
Local government	485	520	7%	35
Nursing care facilities	400	440	11%	40
State government	150	160	3%	<10
Home health care services	150	190	25%	40
Kidney dialysis centers	110	150	39%	40
All others	1,480	1,670	13%	190
Total, all industries (totals may not add due to rounding)	5,880	6,595	12%	715

Student Tips

- **What Employers Say:** Employers emphasize that strong interpersonal skills as well as technical skills are important. Employers also encourage students to have some experience in hospital settings.
- **Skills Employers Seek:** According to today's HIT employers, job seekers should be skilled in these areas.
  - Privacy, confidentiality of health information
  - Basic computer literacy skills
  - Health informatics skills
  - Health information literacy skills
  - Health information/data technical security
- **Certification and Credentials:** For students who earn an Associate Degree from an accredited institution, the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), the leading association for the industry, offers credentialing for Registered Health Information Technicians (RHIT), www.ahima.org.
  - Additional certifications in medical coding may lead to other promotional opportunities.*
  - Key associations connected to HIT employers are listed in Appendix B of the HIT environmental scan at www.coeccc.net/health.

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Educational Track

Here are two examples of HIT programs at community colleges in Los Angeles and Orange counties. For more information, access the HIT environmental scan at www.coeccc.net/health.

Cypress College

Associate of Science Degree in Health IT

Certificate Programs
- Health Information Coding Specialist
- Medical Quality Review Assistant
- Medical Information Technician

Skills Certificate Programs
- Medical Insurance Billing
- Medical Record Clerk Certificate

East Los Angeles College

Associate of Science Degree in Health IT

Certificate Programs
- Health Information Coding Specialist
- Health Information Coding and Statistics Clerk

Skills Certificate Programs
- Health Information Typist Clerk
- Medical Billing Assistant

Source: California Community College Chancellor's Office.

Starting in Fall 2010, new courses in health IT will be offered at Cypress College, East Los Angeles College, Orange Coast College, and Santa Monica College, as part of an ARRA funded short-term training program.

*Many RHITs earn a Certified Coding Specialist (CCS) certification. For more information, see the full report.