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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
313 N. Figueroa, Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 240-8101

October 14, 2005

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.
Director and Chief Medical Officer

SUBJECT: **MEDICAL RECORD CODER TRAINING**

On August 30, 2005, the Board approved a contract with the East Los Angeles College for Medical Records Coder (MRC) training services and also directed the Department to report back on an implementation plan to provide MRC training services at educational institutions in the South Los Angeles area.

CONTRACT WITH EAST LOS ANGELES COLLEGE:

As directed by the Board on August 30, 2005, the Department revised the contract with East Los Angeles College deleting the automatic 12-month extension in the term. The contract is effective from August 30, 2005 through June 30, 2006. As directed by the Board, prior to March 31, 2006, the Department will submit a recommendation to the Board to consider our extension of the term of the East Los Angeles College contract to June 30, 2007 to allow completion of the 18-month coding training program. The Department will also provide a report to the Board on the status of contracting with educational institutions in the South Los Angeles area. In the meantime, the following describes the training programs available in the South Los Angeles area.

CONTRACTING WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE SOUTH LOS ANGELES AREA:

The Health Care Workforce Development Program (HCWDP) investigated the appropriate training programs to prepare entry-level and advanced medical record coders. The field is known as Health

Information Technology (HIT), and can be offered by a college (for credit) or an organization approved by the American Health Information Management Association Council on Accreditation. The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs in cooperation with the American Health Information Management Association Council on Accreditation publishes a current list of accredited programs (www.ahima.org).

In the Los Angeles greater metropolitan area, there are four programs including East Los Angeles College. Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science offers a program and HCWDP is preparing to offer a course for a cohort of DHS employees through Drew University in early 2006. HCWDP staff contacted Steve Donley, Dean of Workforce Development at Cypress College in Orange County (on the border with Los Angeles County), who was not interested in offering a cohort program for County DHS employees at this time. HCWDP staff will continue to dialog with Dean Donley about developing a program in the future. Ladera Career Paths Training Center in Los Angeles does not offer a college credit-bearing program, therefore limiting the career path for participants in a basic program.

HCWDP staff also contacted Diane McBride, the Dean of Workforce Development at the Los Angeles Community College District and Margaret Gordon, the Dean of the College of Extended & International Education at California State University Dominguez Hills about developing an accredited program. The accreditation process involves establishing a program (12 – 18 month in duration) that would seek approval by AHIMA after six months of operation. The Accreditation Council meets bimonthly and would investigate if the applicant program meets standards. To date, neither institution has been interested in establishing a new program. HCWDP staff will continue to work with local educational providers to interest them in developing an accredited program.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know.

TLG:DF:ggc
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c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors