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News Release

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NMCC to offer new health information technology program; Harvey to lead effort

Aroostook County – Northern Maine Community College will offer a new academic program this fall that expands opportunities for those looking for careers in the healthcare field. Health information technology is a growing field with excellent career opportunities both locally and across the country.

“NMCC’s new health information technology program was developed in direct response to requests from local employers,” said Kimberly Esquibel, chair of the college’s nursing and allied health department. “Additionally, research indicates a 20 percent job growth in this field in the next six years, which is much faster than the average.”

This job growth can be attributed to the increased number of medical tests, treatments and procedures that will be performed on an aging population, coupled with the increasing use of electronic health records. More technicians will be needed to complete electronic data management responsibilities.

NMCC’s newest program will train students for careers as these health information technicians. After entering the workforce, these professionals will ensure the quality of medical records by verifying their completeness, accuracy, and proper entry into computer systems. Students entering NMCC’s new HIT program will gain the skills necessary to serve as experts on the patient data that physicians, nurses and other allied health providers rely on to perform their jobs.

The program will include lectures, laboratory classes, and a real world experience through internship. The HIT program combines the expanding arena of health care with cutting edge technology. The program curriculum will provide students with both the theoretical knowledge and practical skills that are essential for careers in today’s healthcare industries.

“The medical field is not just about doctors and nurses. There are a wide variety of opportunities for those looking to work in healthcare. Health information technology is a perfect example of that,” said Esquibel.

Lead instructor for the program will be Rhonda Harvey of Presque Isle, who has worked within the field of technical coding for a number of years. She begins work at the college in August.

“Rhonda is going to be an excellent addition to our campus,” said Tim Crowley, president of NMCC. “Her background and training make her an ideal fit for the college’s new HIT program. She will aid in the college’s continuing efforts to provide students with new innovative courses of study relevant to today’s workforce.”

Harvey comes to NMCC from Precyse, LLC, where she is currently serving as a traveling coding consultant. She is responsible for coding inpatient records and maintaining current ICD-9 diagnosis and procedure code. Her work with Precyse, LLC, combined with a previously held position at The Aroostook Medical Center, has provided a strong understanding of coding principals, government policies, as well as an understanding of HIPAA privacy and security regulations.

“There is a tremendous need for HIT professionals nationwide. I am so excited that NMCC is going to be offering this program, and that I get to be involved in it. I am really looking forward to being part of the NMCC community,” said Harvey.

Harvey holds a master’s degree in business administration and a baccalaureate degree in health information administration from Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri. She attended the American Health Information Management Association Academy (AHIMA) for ICD-10 training and is a certified ICD-10 CM/PCS trainer. She holds credentials for the Registered Health Information Administration (RHIA) and is also a Certified Coding Specialist (CCS) and state of Maine grant administrator.

Individuals interested in entering the HIT program should contact NMCC’s admissions office for more information at (207) 768-2785 or admissions@nmcc.edu.

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