Benchmarking: Coding Productivity

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April 19, 2007

Practical Tools for Seminar Learning
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Some of the information in this presentation has been presented by Ms. Dunn at National AHIMA Conferences, State CSA Meetings, and HCPro and AHIMA Audio Seminars or published in various journals, newsletters, or books
Faculty

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Objectives

- Discuss some of the issues impacting coder productivity
- Discuss approaches to measuring productivity
- Example
- Other Considerations

Golden Rule

- Don’t assume that what is done at other places is the same as what is done at your place
- Idiosyncrasies
- System differences
- Expectation differences
Issues Impacting Coder Productivity

- Environment (workplace/ space/ noise)
- Technology (encoder, PC, access to transcribed documents and other reports, computer assisted coding tools)
  - Ease of connection
  - Training/ Skills
- Education and Experience

Issues Impacting Coder Productivity

- Priorities
  - Unbilled
  - Compliance
  - Quality
    - Comprehensiveness
    - Secondaries- Severity
  - Quantity
Issues Impacting Coder Productivity

- **Condition of record**
  - All paper
    - Assembled/ not assembled
  - Hybrid
    - Ease in access to parts
    - Timeliness of access
    - Quality of images
    - Technology support

Issues Impacting Coder Productivity

- **Condition of record**
  - Completely electronic
    - Does it look and feel like the old record
    - Can you tell the story
    - Cut and Paste/ Templates
    - Toggle effort
  - Legible/ readable
    - Typed
  - Complete/ Incomplete
Polling Question #1

What do you think impacts productivity the most?

*1 Environment
*2 Technology
*3 Education and Experience
*4 Condition of Record

Issues Impacting Coder Productivity

- Documentation
  - Adequate
  - High percentage of queries >1%

- Support
  - Clerical staff to pull/file
  - Clerical staff to enter data into abstract
  - Interference person
  - Resources
Issues Impacting Coder Productivity

- **Other Duties**
  - Other HIM Duties
    - Analysis
    - ROI
    - Transcription
  - Quality Related Activities
    - Core Measures/ORYX
    - Occurrence Data

- **Other Duties**
  - Reimbursement Related Activities
    - Capturing Charges
    - Validating Charges
  - Coding only
    - How much does the chargemaster push through
  - Committee Duties
    - Revenue Cycle
    - Chargemaster
Polling Question #2

Have you established productivity expectations?

* 1 Yes
* 2 No

Approaches to Measuring Productivity

* Miller and Waterstraat (Apples to Apples: Using Autobenchmarking to Measure Productivity 1/04)
  • Coined “Autobenchmarking”
  • Promotes developing your own productivity standards
    • Productivity benchmarks are not transferable
    • Too much variability between entities
  • Adopts the US DOL Definition of “labor productivity” as output per hour
Approaches to Measuring Productivity

- Miller and Waterstraat
  - Output = completed work meeting the “task specification”
    - Excludes defective work
  - Choose a measurement technique that is:
    - Valid
    - Accurate
    - Time efficient
    - Cost effective

### Approaches to Measuring Productivity

- Miller and Waterstraat
  - Incorporates an audit component
    - Suggested 5% sample-to identify defective work output

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coder</th>
<th>Work Output</th>
<th>Tot Hrs Worked</th>
<th>Avg Hrly Output</th>
<th>% Final Output</th>
<th>Fin Work Output</th>
<th>Avg Hrly Output</th>
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<td>3.57</td>
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<td>140</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avg</td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Approaches to Measuring Productivity

**Miller and Waterstraat**

- Autobenchmarking intent
  - To benchmark the performance of their individual employees against their own departmental work output
  - Internally measured against one’s peers doing the same work
  - Self-adjusts continually

- Successful if data collected weekly over long period before being used—6 months+
- Some display suggestions
- Requires Manager to investigate variances
  - Coder C—lower production
  - Coder D—accuracy rate
**Approaches to Measuring Productivity**

- **Myjer and Butu** (2004 IHRO Congress & AHIMA Convention Proceedings)
  - Comparing to self
    - Doesn’t tell you how the “Best Performers” are doing
  - Comparing to others
    - Comparability/ differences in practices
  - Comparing to published data (consortium)
    - Comparability issues
      - Mix of facility types and complexities

- **Myjer and Butu**
  - Benefits of benchmarking with others
    - Stimulates thinking
      - Process comparison
    - Borrowing ideas from others
    - Re-examine existing approaches
  - Disadvantages
    - Idiosyncrasies
    - Data may not be accurate
Approaches to Measuring Productivity

• Myjer and Butu
  • Uses the work hours equivalent of an FTE
    • Productive RVU (89% of paid hours = the RVU)
    • Estimates number of records per RVU
  • Monitor quality routinely

Approaches to Measuring Productivity

• Dunn
  • Looking within
  • Worked hours
    • Exclude non-worked hours
    • Define non-worked hours
  • Minimum Expectations
    • Stretch goals
  • Routine quality reviews
  • Annual re-review
Example

Data Collection and Analysis
- 2-3 pay periods
- Preferably without holidays
- Calculate averages
- Identify the mid-point between the average and the high producer

Define the Expectation
- Expectation = Midpoint between Average and High Producer = Stretch goal

Monitoring/Continuous Improvement
- Share results
- Re-evaluate annually
- Continuously monitor quality
- Provide ongoing education
Polling Question #3

What are your quality expectations?

*1 90-93%
*2 94-95%
*3 96-97%
*4 98-100%
*5 We have not established quality expectations

Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coder</th>
<th>Work Output</th>
<th>Total Hours Worked</th>
<th>Avg. Output/Worked Hour</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>140</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stretch</td>
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</table>
Other Considerations

- Remove the hurdles
- Sending coders home
  - Increased productivity
- Technology
  - Dual Screens
    - Flat and Large
- Computer Assisted Coding options
- Ergonomics and Temperature

Other Considerations

- Advancement Opportunities
  - Coding Career Ladder
    - Coder I
      - Accurately codes 1 type of Outpatient
    - Coder II
      - Accurately codes 2 or more types of Outpatient
    - Coding Specialist I
      - Accurately codes Inpatient and Outpatient
    - Coding Specialist II/Senior Coder
      - All duties of Specialist I and Compliance activities
Other Considerations

- Ask the Coding Team!
  - Work with the issues daily
  - Know the best way to do their job
  - Know what they want
- Recognition

Reference Materials

Resources

- Dunn, R. *Coder Productivity*, HCPro 2006
- Dunn, R. “Performance Standards for Coding Professionals,” *For the Record*, September 16 and 23, 1991
- Dunn, R. “Staffing Standards: Do We Have What It Takes?” *For the Record*, March 29, 1993

Resources

Resources

- Dunn, R. Haimann’s Healthcare Management 8th Ed., published by Health Administration Press. 2006
- Dunn, R. More With Less, published by HCPro. 2004
- Flanagan, Christopher. “Using ‘Key Indicators’ to Report, Monitor, and Improve HIM Operations” AHIMA BOK
- Orenstein, Anita “Performance Management and Process Improvement”. Effective Management of Coding Services (AHIMA)
- HFMA. “Self Assessment Tool.” Available online at www.hfma.org/resource/focus_areas/patient_financial_svcs/400285.htm

Thank you

For your attention and for taking time out of your busy day.
Audience Questions

Audio Seminar Discussion

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