

2013

Set the Record Straight with *On Assignment*Health Information
Management**OA Employee Spotlight**

**Jennifer
Loughrey**
RHIT, CCS
**Inpatient Coding
Consultant**

I stumbled across coding while pursuing my associate's degree in Health Information Technology at Columbus State Community College. I fell in love with how it incorporated my love for the medical field, especially anatomy and pathophysiology, but didn't involve patient care, which I no longer wanted. This was my second attempt at finishing a college degree before my oldest daughter graduated from high school. She graduated in 2006, but it was not until 2007 that I graduated from CSCC's HIT program. Shortly thereafter I sat for my RHIT exam and passed.

Let's back up to explain why I chose HIM to pursue at age 38. My first time in college was in the 80's. I originally wanted to be a doctor, but found out the hours they worked, so I entered the nursing program instead. Having children interrupted me from finishing the program. College was put on hold until both daughters were in elementary school, but didn't actually happen until they were in high school. I have a pretty good excuse why it didn't happen as planned – I was thrown one of life's curveballs!

In 1993, at the age of 28, a previously undiagnosed congenital condition caused a hemorrhage inside my spinal cord leaving me with a new life as a tetraplegic (three limbs paralyzed, but with

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High Flu Activity Continues Nationwide

www.cdc.gov

What to Do about the Flu

The 2012–2013 influenza season started early and activity remains high in the United States. This may continue for some time. With that in mind, there are steps you can take to protect yourself and your family from the flu. CDC recommends a three-step approach to fighting influenza.

1. Get a flu vaccine.
2. Take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs.
3. Take flu antiviral drugs if your doctor prescribes them.

Flu Can Be Serious

Influenza, commonly called the "flu," is a contagious viral infection that affects the respiratory system – your nose, throat, and lungs. Symptoms of the flu can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. Some people may also have vomiting and diarrhea.

Influenza is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes even death. Every flu season is different, and influenza infection can affect people differently. CDC estimates that from the 1976–1977 flu season to the 2006–2007 season, flu-associated deaths each season ranged from a low of about 3,000 people to a high of about 49,000 people.

Get a Flu Vaccine

The first and most important step is to get a flu vaccination each year. If you haven't gotten vaccinated yet, you should still try to. With very few exceptions, everyone 6 months of age and older should get an annual flu vaccine as soon as vaccines are available. Vaccination is especially important for people at high risk to decrease their likelihood of getting sick and possibly having serious illness. People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions (like asthma, diabetes, or heart and lung disease), and people 65 years and older.

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ASK THE EXPERT!

What is Aphasia?

Aphasia is a language disorder caused by damage to the area of the brain that processes language. The most common cause is due to stroke (causing an acute aphasia), however, dementia, brain infections, traumatic brain injuries, and brain tumors may also cause it, presenting with a chronic and progressive manifestation of the condition. The type and severity of aphasia experienced will depend on which region of the brain is affected and the severity of damage.

There are several main types of acute (local) aphasia:

- Receptive aphasia
- Transcortical sensory aphasia
- Conduction aphasia
- Anomic aphasia
- Expressive aphasia
- Transcortical motor aphasia
- Global aphasia
- Isolation or mixed transcortical aphasia

Feature symptoms include:

- Inability to read
- Inability to write
- Inability to repeat a phrase
- Inability to comprehend language
- Inability to pronounce words
- Inability to form words
- Inability to speak spontaneously
- Inability to name objects
- Poor enunciation
- Excessive creation and use of personal neologisms
- Persistent repetition of phrases
- Paraphasia (substituting letters, syllables, or words)
- Agrammatism (inability to speak in a grammatically correct fashion)
- Dysprosody (alterations in inflexion, stress, and rhythm)
- Incomplete sentences
- Limited verbal output
- Difficulty in naming



OA Employee of the Month



Indigo Hammons

**Recruiter
HIM Contract Team**

I had five years of recruiting experience in various industries prior to joining On Assignment HIM. Having a diverse background in recruiting has assisted with my transition to the healthcare industry over the last two years.

I find working as a recruiter requires the use of many skills that include, but are not limited to, being a friend, cheerleader, coach, and sometimes even therapist. It is rewarding to have a part in helping my candidates achieve their goals and dreams. My previous experience has come in handy over the last couple of years in my role here at On Assignment HIM. It has been rewarding to develop relationships with each consultant that I work with. In some cases I am the "lifeline" back home, making sure they make it home safe and sound. In other cases, I am the air traffic controller, making sure that other variables do not interrupt a smooth assignment!

I have a lot of respect for my HIM consultants. They are all very well versed in their skills and knowledge of the industry, and it's a pleasure to see how much pride goes into the work they do.

It has been a great experience building relationships with each of my HIM consultants. Also, the team at On Assignment is fantastic to work with. The leadership of Brian Lasch and Nate Haros is a nice blend of expertise, respect, ethics, transparency, and support.

I look forward to a great year in 2013. As the industry changes and grows, I feel that On Assignment is in a great position to capitalize on the market. As an HIM consultant, On Assignment is the place you want to be. If any of my family members were HIM consultants, I would tell them to work for On Assignment. They really do put **People First**.

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some movement in those limbs, and my dominant right hand/arm were perfectly fine!). Rehab at OSU Medical Center's Dodd Hall aided my new life, but my kids were THE biggest motivators. My girls were four and six when this happened, and they inspired me to become the best new me I could. The canes, walkers, and wheelchairs I used were not going to keep me from being the best I could be nor would they define me.

The detour from returning to college included more than just rehab therapy. The time was also spent as soccer mom, chauffeur mom, "dirt crawler" (which is how I garden), garden club president, volunteer, PTA member, wife, Girl Scout leader, church service committee member, and so on. Eventually, I was co-owner of a pediatric rehab business that provided physical, occupational, and speech therapy services to primarily autistic children. I could not get affordable healthcare benefits as a small business owner with a pre-existing condition, so relied on the health insurance through my husband's employer. However, when going through my divorce, I knew I needed an employer who could offer affordable benefits when COBRA expired. I sold my part in the business to find that career.

While helping one of my girls look through career options on the Bureau of Labor and Statistics website, I read a description of HIM careers. This career field seemed to fit everything I had done, and I could build on it. So I went back to school.

Next stop, I started coding at a small community hospital in Circleville, Ohio, as an

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DID YOU KNOW?

Some aphasics (people who have some varying degree of severity of aphasia, a sequelae/residual deficit brain damage/injury due to stroke, trauma, infection, etc.) seem to have unusually heightened powers of perception in the undamaged part of their brains. Many appear to acquire a skill of “reading” facial expressions and can perceive lies through facial cues up to 75% of the time versus persons with no brain damage at 50% (consistent with pure chance outcomes). They can become rather reliable “human lie detectors”.

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At this point the flu vaccine may be harder to find now than it was earlier in the season. You may need to contact more than one provider (pharmacy, health department, or doctor) to find available vaccine.

If you've already been vaccinated this season, you have taken the most important step to protect yourself and those around you from flu. Unfortunately, there are a couple of reasons why it's still possible to get the flu despite being vaccinated. First, people may be exposed to a flu virus shortly before getting vaccinated or during the two-week period it takes the body to develop an immune response following vaccination. Second, there's a possibility of catching a different flu virus not included in the vaccine. Most of the viruses characterized by CDC have been similar to the viruses in the vaccine, but the flu vaccine is not likely to protect against other viruses. And last, sometimes the flu vaccine doesn't work as well for some people, which means that some people can get sick with the flu despite being vaccinated. The ability of flu vaccine to protect a person depends, in part, on the health and age of the person being vaccinated. In general, the flu vaccine works best among young healthy adults and older children. Some older people and people with certain chronic illnesses may develop less immunity after vaccination. For that reason, it's important to know what else you can do to help keep you from getting sick, and what to do if you do get sick with flu.

Take Everyday Preventive Actions to Stop the Spread of Germs

Everyday preventive actions are steps that people can take to help slow the spread of germs that cause respiratory illness, like flu. They are not a substitute for vaccination. These include the following personal and community actions:

- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you or your child gets sick with a respiratory illness, like flu, limit contact with others as much as possible to help prevent spreading illness. Stay home (or keep your child home) for at least 24 hours after fever is gone except to seek medical care or for other necessities. Fever should

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ICD-10 Corner

I've been frustrated when coding in ICD-9 without a code to acknowledge patients who have previously had peripheral angioplasty? Is there a code in ICD-10-CM for these?

Yes! There are expanded codes to represent patients' “status” of previous procedures. And, there is not one, but **two** codes for patients who are status post peripheral angioplasty:

Z98.62 Peripheral vascular angioplasty status
(when no stents were left behind)

Z95.820 Peripheral vascular angioplasty status
with implants and grafts (when stents were
placed)

But wait, there's more ... ICD-10-CM has additional codes for coronary angioplasty status:

Z98.61 Coronary angioplasty status (when no
stents were left behind)

Z95.5 Presence of coronary angioplasty implant
and graft (when stents were placed)

To become familiar with these new codes, I suggest you take some time to review the last section of the ICD-10-CM code set: Factors Influencing Health Status and Contact with Health Services – Z codes. You might be surprised to find many helpful codes that you will be using on a regular basis.

Do you have an ICD-10 related question? Contact Tori at vweinert@torionit.com – you just might see your topic discussed in the next issue of Set the Record Straight.

TALK TO US

On Assignment HIM welcomes your feedback.
Please share your thoughts with us at
kristin.walsh@onassignment.com



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Set the Record Straight with *On Assignment*Health Information
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outpatient coder in 2007. In 2008, I became an inpatient coder at Wexner Medical Center (previously Ohio State University Medical Center). I was fortunate to work at this type of hospital system because it prepared me to be able to code nearly everything. During my four and a half years there I earned my CCS credentials.

I took the leap to become a contract coder for On Assignment HIM last year. It was an opportunity to earn better compensation for the credentials and experience I have. A contract coder I knew told me I should check out On Assignment – that it was the up-and-coming, premier company to work for in contract coding. I looked into On Assignment along with many other companies. I liked their health, dental and eye insurance options; short-term disability; and life insurance benefits. There were also the perks of coding books and my AHIMA dues being paid for! These were all better than most of the companies I spoke with.

David Solarsh is my recruiter, and he's the best at follow-up and follow-through. He always has my back and I thank him for it. He obtained the perfect assignment for me – full-time, remote inpatient coding that was a long-term assignment and paid by the hour; not by the chart. I coded remotely for one and a half years before On Assignment, and liked working in my pajamas with my Great Dane, Turbo, on one side of me and my cat, Pandora, on the other. I could not go back to dressing up and commuting to work onsite! The traffic is much better and I have no problems finding handicapped parking when working remotely.

I know traveling is an enjoyable part of the job for many contract coders, but I spent my childhood as a "corporate brat." I lived in seven different states and four different countries before I even graduated from high school, then two more states as an adult. So, I elect a homebody lifestyle here in Central Ohio. I live in an "empty nest" with my boyfriend of ten years who is my personal IT guy. We share our home with the aforementioned pets. In the cold of a Midwest winter we are now enjoying lots of TV channels and college basketball games. My Dad played college basketball and took me to lots of great college games as a kid. We lived in Cary, NC, and I got to enjoy some great games. I still root for Duke, but now like other teams, too. My oldest daughter received her bachelor's degree at OSU and my youngest daughter received her bachelor's degree at the University of Cincinnati. My boyfriend went to OSU and I worked at OSU. Go Bucks and Bearcats! March Madness is one of my favorite times of year and I hope one of my teams makes it to the dance!



Give flu prevention a shot

**7 Ways To Help Fight The Flu**

- 1 Take time to get a flu vaccine.**
The flu vaccine exposes your body to flu viruses, which builds immunity against them. This is one of the best things you can do to avoid the flu.
- 2 Wash your hands frequently.**
Some flu viruses can live up to two hours on surfaces such as desks, phones and door knobs. Use warm water and soap, and scrub for about 15-20 seconds.
- 3 Avoid touching your face.**
The eyes, nose, and mouth are entry ports for flu viruses.
- 4 Cover your mouth.**
Use a disposable tissue when coughing and sneezing – dispose of tissues and wash your hands immediately.
- 5 Drink more water.**
It's important to stay hydrated – consume at least 8 glasses of water a day. Staying hydrated moistens mucous membranes, which can lower your chance of catching the flu.
- 6 Maintain a healthy lifestyle.**
This should include a moderate exercise program 3-4 days a week, getting enough sleep, and managing your stress. These activities can strengthen the immune system and increase your body's natural ability to fight infection.
- 7 Finally, listen to your body.**
If you have symptoms, such as a fever or coughing, try to avoid contact with others, treat your symptoms with store-bought remedies, stay hydrated, and contact your doctor if your symptoms become severe.

On Assignment
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For information regarding our \$500
referral bonus program, please email

kristin.walsh@onassignment.com



Set the Record Straight with *On Assignment*

Health Information Management

? WHO KNOWS ?

Sometimes confused with **aphasia**, _____ is another condition that describes an inability to swallow. It can be caused by any number of mental or physical etiologies.

1. **What is the correct term?**
2. **What are the ICD-9 and ICD-10 codes that describe the term?**

There are three complete answers: the term and the code set representatives for the term (assume Not Otherwise Specified).

Send your answers to:

kristin.walsh@onassignment.com

All correct answers will be put into a raffle for a chance to win a \$25 gift card from On Assignment HIM!

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be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.

- If an outbreak of flu or another illness occurs, follow public health advice. This may include information about how to increase distance between people and other measures.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. This will block the spread of droplets from your mouth or nose that could contain germs.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

Take Flu Antiviral Drugs if Your Doctor Prescribes Them

If you do get the flu, there are antiviral drugs that can treat your illness. They are a second line of defense. This type of medication is not available over-the-counter, so you will need a prescription, but antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and shorten the time you are sick. They are most effective when started within two days of getting sick, though starting them later can still be helpful, especially for those with high risk conditions. Early treatment is especially important for people who are at high risk of flu complications. Your doctor will decide whether you need antiviral drugs and CDC has provided guidance on who should be treated. Let's all do our part to prevent the flu.

This article can be found at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/features/fluactivity/>



December 2012 ?WHO KNOWS?



And the winner is.....



Krista L.!



December Answers:



Z51.11, C50.911, Z90.11, Z80.3, E03.9, Z86.711, Z86.718, Z79.01, Z79.810, 3E05305



People First.



Interim Management Solutions

On Assignment's Health Information Management offers a cost-effective solution to ensure responsiveness and accountability. Our professional Director of HIM consultants assist healthcare organizations in meeting their operational and financial goals through Contract, Contract-To-Hire, and Direct Hire staffing. We partner with the healthcare industry to maintain the ongoing management and utilization of patient data, ensuring its timely availability.

On Assignment provides experienced, reliable management consultants when you need them the most:

- Vacancy at the Director, Manager, and Supervisor level
- Transitioning to a new HIM Director
- Assistance with preparation for department audits
- Mentorship and leadership

Our trained consultants assist with the following:

- Plan, communicate, organize, and problem solve within the HIM department to meet your defined expectations
- Thorough departmental assessment to determine deficiencies
- Evaluate your systems to optimize delivery of HIM related services to customers while meeting financial and compliance goals
- Effective leadership and team building help HIM staff maximize productivity in all areas
- Effective communication with administration to provide results on various goals and metrics

Get the results you are looking for!

On Assignment Services:

- Interim Management
- Hospital Inpatient / Outpatient / ED / IR Coding
- Remote Coding Services
- Auditing Services
- Coding Education / Training
- Certified Tumor Registrars

About On Assignment HIM

On Assignment Health Information Management is a recognized leader in the health and life sciences staffing industry. Making highly successful placements for more than 25 years has earned us the reputation as one of the best in the business.

The On Assignment HIM division is solely dedicated to recruiting, retaining, and placing top Health Information Management professionals in Contract and Direct Hire positions throughout the United States.

