

OA Employee Spotlight

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I grew up in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, with my two sisters and brother. My parents were



always working, so their work ethic was instilled in me. I graduated from Slippery Rock University with a degree in physical education/sports management. I then moved to King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, and followed my career path working and managing fitness centers throughout the Philadelphia area. At first this was very exciting, but I soon realized I needed to find something more mind-challenging that paid more.

I began working for a staffing agency that my sister Paula started back in the mid-90s. Her company had a lot of clients who needed coders. These coders were in high demand and making a good salary. So I began training and working on ER records. I felt like I had finally found my place in the HIM field, but realized in order to be competitive I had to become certified, so I obtained my CCS in 2004. After my sister sold the company, I left and began working for a hospital just outside of Philadelphia. I worked and learned so much there, but after eight years of the same thing I needed a change. This is when I got into contract coding.

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How to Declutter Your Life and Reduce Stress

by Julie McCormick

Excessive clutter is often a symptom and a cause of stress and can affect every facet of your life, from the time it takes you to do things to your finances and your overall enjoyment of life. Clutter can distract you, weigh you down, and in general it invites chaos into your life. Oftentimes, however, tackling the clutter can seem an insurmountable task if you don't know where or how to start. By devoting a little of your time to getting rid of the clutter in your life and maintaining things relatively clutter-free, you'll reap the rewards of pleasing living areas, reduced stress, and a more organized and productive existence.

The best way to tackle the decluttering of your home, your work space, and your life is to take things one small step at a time. Combined, small steps will lead to big improvements that will be easier to maintain over the long run. Here is a blueprint of how to start tackling the clutter and enjoying a less stressful life:

Your Work Area

If you want to be more productive and focused in your work, getting the clutter out of your work area is essential.

- **Start with your desk.** Clear everything off the top of it and take everything out of the drawers. Assemble the items in piles on the floor. Clean and wipe down your desk, and marvel at how pretty and clean it looks. Sort through all of the "stuff" that was both in and on your desk. Toss out as much as possible leaving a relatively small amount. Once you've weeded things out, it's time to sort through the remains. Set up a basic alphabetical filing system with a folder for each project or client. Keep your office supplies and other items in designated drawers. If you need to, label things, but the main thing you should do is designate a spot for every item you decided to keep and make sure that it stays there, or goes back there when you're done using it. Keep flat surfaces clear, and have an inbox for all incoming papers. When the papers come in, sort them each day – toss, delegate, do immediately, or simply file all documents, but whatever you do, **DO NOT KEEP THEM ON TOP OF YOUR DESK.** All you want on the surface of your desk is your phone, computer, inbox, and maybe a special photo in addition to the documents you are working with at the moment.

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ASK THE EXPERT!

What is an Oncogene?

An **oncogene** is a gene that has the potential to cause cancer – in tumor cells, they are often mutated or expressed at high levels.

A **tumor suppressor gene**, or **anti-oncogene**, is a gene that protects a cell from one step on the path to developing into cancer. When this gene is mutated to cause a loss or reduction in its function, the cell can progress to cancer, usually in combination with other genetic changes.

Many antineoplastic drugs specifically target the protein products encoded by oncogenes.

Look for On Assignment HIM at these upcoming events:

CHIA
June 10-12
Palm Desert, CA

TxHIMA
June 28-30
Fort Worth, TX

Stop by to meet members of the team and for your chance to win a \$200 AMEX gift card.



Set the Record Straight with *On Assignment*

Health Information
Management

OA Employee of the Month



Oscar Cross RHIT, CCS

*AHIMA Approved
ICD-10-CM/PCS Trainer, and
HIM Compliance,
Audit, & Education Manager*

I am honored to be featured in this month's *Set the Record Straight* newsletter. I began my HIM/coding career over 15 years ago. I had an eagerness to be in the healthcare and medical science industry and was then introduced to the Health Information Management field. I developed an interest in cancer registry, coding, and general HIM operations processes. So far in my career, I have worked in the Release of Information, Cancer Registry, Inpatient and Outpatient Coding, Audit, Management, Consultations and Staffing. I look forward to further study and growth within this profession, and of course continued success with and for On Assignment HIM's candidates, clients, and colleagues.

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My first assignment was in Modesto, California, and I couldn't believe how much I loved Northern California. After six months in Modesto, the contract ended. Another company contacted me with the promise of working in Northern California, so I joined this company, but was then told California was not an option. Upset and frustrated, I gave up on the idea of ever getting back to California. I felt lucky to have had the experience and would move on, until a friend of mine suggested that I call Brian Lasch at On Assignment HIM. I was told that all I have to do is let him know what I want to do and where I want to be and he will do his best to make it happen. So I called Brian on a Monday morning, he got back to me that afternoon and by that evening he had a job for me in San Francisco. I couldn't believe how fast things happened once I called On Assignment HIM. It's been nearly a year now and I'm still in San Francisco, and loving every minute of my job, career, and working for On Assignment HIM.

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- **Declutter your computer.** Get rid of files and programs on your computer that you don't need. Get rid of most or all of the icons on your desktop. They not only slow down your computer, but they also create visual clutter. There are better ways of accessing your information. Regularly purge old, unused files. If organization is not your thing, utilize a program such as Google Desktop to search for your files when you need them.
- **Then move on to information.** In the digital world of today, there are so many different ways that information creeps into our lives. Information itself can become overwhelming when you have too much of it, and this is called information clutter. Instead of letting information take over your life, set limits. Reduce the number of things that you read each day and get rid of things from your RSS feed. Chuck those magazine subscriptions, and reduce your consumption of news and television. I'm not suggesting that you cut yourself off from the world, just that setting some boundaries will help. Instead of letting information take over your life, even the kind that friends share on Facebook, control how and when you receive it by limiting what you read.

Your Home

Outside of work, home is where we spend a bulk of our time. So it's no wonder that a messy house can add to daily stress.

- **Simplify your rooms.** If your rooms are too cluttered, you'll want to simplify them. Start by clearing off anything that is on the floors. Throw out or donate unused things. After clearing the floor, move to flat surfaces such as counter-tops, shelves, tops of dressers, etc. Clear them as much as possible, and then move onto furniture. Consider if you need everything. Sort things in piles – toss, donate, or keep. Organize everything that you've decided to keep into drawers, cabinets, and closets, keeping them out of sight, but still neatly organized and uncluttered. Do this one room at a time.
- **Tackle the closets.** Closets are a great place to store things that you don't want out in the open, and can easily become a place where you shove things just to

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**"He isn't taking any calls right now.
He's backing up his brain to the cloud."**

Set the Record Straight with *OnAssignment* Health Information Management

DID YOU KNOW?

Gefitinib, also known as **Iressa** is an antineoplastic drug that inhibits an enzyme (tyrosine kinase) present in (non-small cell) lung (primarily) and certain breast cancer cells, as well as other cancers and normal tissues, that appears to be important to the growth of cancer cells. It is taken alone, not in combination with other forms of chemotherapy. The drug has proven to be as effective as chemotherapy as a second-line therapy for the disease with less side effects. The drug is an EGFR (epidermal growth factor receptor) inhibitor that interrupts signaling through the EGFR pathway in target cells. The drug is only effective in cancers with mutated and overactive EGFR, therefore, it should only be given to people with these specific mutations. A study found that patients who received **Gefitinib (Iressa)** and whose tumors had EGFR mutations will have an improved response rate and progression-free survival.

Mutations that lead to EGFR over expression or over activity have been associated with a number of cancers, including lung and anal cancers.

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keep them out of view. Go through your closets – take everything out, clean it, and toss or donate as much as you can. Decide on a specific place to store anything you decide to keep. Keep only the things that you love and use frequently. As for your clothes, get rid of anything that you haven't worn in six months.

- **Clean out your drawers.** Drawers are a prime place for things to get shoved into. Empty out your drawers, and sort items by whether you're keeping, tossing, or donating them.

Your Life

Decluttering your work area and your home are great ways to start reducing the clutter and stress in your life, but there's still more than you can do.

- **Reduce your commitments.** Oftentimes, our lives are too cluttered with all of the things that we need to do at home, work, school, in our religious or civic lives, with friends and family, with hobbies, and so on. Take a look at each area of your life and write down all of your commitments. Seeing it all written down can be quite an eye-opening experience, as well as overwhelming. From here, look at each one and decide whether it really brings you joy and value, and if it is worth the amount of time that you invest in it.

- Another way to reduce your commitments is to identify a few that you truly

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ICD-10 Corner

I work at a pain clinic – are there any changes to coding pain conditions in ICD-10 that we need to be aware of?

Coding conditions related to pain have puzzled coders at one time or another. Terminology and appropriate use of pain codes can be confusing. For example, 'chronic pain' is not equivalent to 'chronic pain syndrome.' Others have wondered: At what point does 'acute pain' become 'chronic pain'—one month, three months, or maybe six months? If all patients experience pain after surgery, how is it we have codes to identify acute post-operative pain and chronic post-operative pain? The answer is simple – we have to rely on the physicians' clinical judgment to state the condition they are treating. If the coder is still unsure, it's their responsibility to communicate a query to the physician for clarification. For example, Fibromyalgia is no longer grouped under myalgia and myositis, it has its own distinct code (**M79.7 Fibromyalgia**).

In ICD-10-CM, a diagnosis of acute pain without being specified further will lead to a code from the Signs, Symptoms, and Abnormal Clinical and Laboratory Findings chapter (**R52 Pain, unspecified**). This stresses the importance of the documentation in the record to specify the cause or at the very least, site of the pain. ICD-10 offers two code choices for psychogenic pain:

- **F45.41 Pain disorder exclusively related to psychological factors.** Use this code when no source of pain has been discovered and the physician has deemed the pain to be solely symptomatic of the patient's psychological disorder. Since there is no pain diagnosis, no code from the G89 category should be assigned.
- **F45.42 Pain disorder with related psychological factors.** Use this code if the physician is recognizing the patient's pain and has *associated* it to a psychological condition. You can also assign a code from the G89 category, especially if this is being treated.

*Do you have an ICD-10 related question?
Contact Tori at wweinert@torionit.com*



Set the Record Straight with *OnAssignment* Health Information Management

? WHO KNOWS ?

_____ is the process of determining the extent to which a cancer (primary malignancy) has developed by spreading (secondary metastasis) within the body.

The TNM (Tumor, Node, Metastasis) system is a widely used format for this description/process.

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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love, and get rid of the rest. Learn how to say no and decline offers. If you eliminate the things that don't bring you joy or value, you'll have more time for the things that you love.

How to Maintain Order Over the Long-Term

Once you've successfully decluttered, whether it be one area or all the areas mentioned above, clutter will inevitably begin to creep back into your life. You must be vigilant in weeding it out on a regular basis, or it will just take over your life again.

- **Set up a system to keep clutter in check.** Examine the way that you do things and how things make their way into your life, and consider whether you can put together a simple system for everything. Write down your systems step-by-step and try to follow them as best as you can.

Don't slack off. It's easy to put things off for another day, but it'll save you headaches in the long-run if you deal with things immediately. Throw it out, donate it, or keep it and put it in a designated area.

For more information, go to:

<http://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/how-to-declutter-your-life-and-reduce-stress.html>



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Visit our website and discover the updated functionality, new job search features, simplified application process, and mobile view for smartphone and tablet users.

People First.

OnAssignment
Health Information Management

Coding Services

On Assignment Health Information Management offers a cost-effective solution to ensure responsiveness and accountability. Our professional coding 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 HIM consultants when you need them the most.

Our hiring criteria:

- RHIA, RHIT, or CCS credential (AHIMA verified)
- Extensive evaluation process includes testing, and qualification verification
- Minimum 3 years of experience in an acute care setting (our average is 12 years)
- ICD-9, CPT-4, MS-DRG, and APC systems
- Experience with various encoder / abstract systems
- Multi-case mix experience
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The On Assignment HIM division is solely dedicated to recruiting, retaining, and placing top Health Information Management professionals on Contract and Direct Hire positions throughout the United States.

