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Computer-Assisted Coding Software Standard Recommendations from a Workshop

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ABSTRACT

- Standards needed for computer-assisted coding software
- FORE/AHIMA convened a workshop for vendors and other stakeholders in September 2006.
- The results are presented here as a basis for continued discussion with interested parties.

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INTRODUCTION

- Goals:
  1. Raising awareness of the need for CAC software standards
  2. Delineating the scope of the challenge
  3. Gathering input from a variety of stakeholders
  4. Recommending a framework for CAC software standards
  5. Determining the necessary and desired next steps

METHODS – FIRST DAY

- Presentation of solicited technical papers in the following areas:
  - Evaluation methods and metrics
  - Software development
  - Implementation testing
  - Regulatory Issues

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METHODS – SECOND DAY

- Working group breakouts
  - Software Management and Use – including implementation issues
  - Audit Mechanisms – AKA Quality Assurance, this is integral to all healthcare data
  - Metrics and Evaluation – determining the accuracy of CAC software

METHODS – SECOND DAY

- Working group breakouts (con't)
  - Certification – possibly needed to promote user acceptance
  - Test Suite – standard source for testing functionality and accuracy. Very complex and expensive undertaking.

SHORT-TERM NEXT STEPS

1. Establish a public forum for continued dialogue and development
2. Benchmark current U.S. coding processes to better understand the impact of CAC
3. Begin an education process with all stakeholders

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SHORT-TERM NEXT STEPS

4. Reconvene in 2007 (now scheduled for October 5-6, 2007 in Philadelphia, PA)
5. Develop a consensus on a standard U.S. coding process as a precursor to a best practice and metrics

LONG-TERM NEXT STEPS

1. Fully defining a coding gold standard for accuracy
2. Determining what combination of testing, certification and conformance are best for standardization
3. Educating current and future coding professionals to effectively use CAC
4. Continued pursuit of the “right” code – assigned with 100% accuracy

CONCLUSIONS

- Computer-assisted coding is an emerging technology having an effect on all purposes for which coded data are used.
- FORE/AHIMA welcomes the comments and involvement of all interested parties.

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CAC SOFTWARE STANDARDS WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

The entire proceedings, with technical papers, can be found at http://www.ahima.org/perspectives/conference_papers.asp.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- This conference was supported with grants from 3M, MedQuist and CodeRyte.

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