

Karen Pickering, RHIT, CCS
Senior Consultant

Karen brings over 30 years of experience in coding, auditing and mentoring to hospitals and other healthcare facility clients. She performs inpatient and outpatient hospital coding and billing reviews for a multitude of healthcare settings to insure correct, compliant coding and reimbursement practices. She has also performed documentation gap analysis for ICD-10 coding during the recent Centers for Medicare and Medicaid's (CMS) implementation phase. She assists clients in reviewing accounts subject to scrutiny by the client's Recovery Audit Contractor (RAC), as well as preparing responses and/or appeals to inquiries when warranted. Karen is proficient in ICD-10-CM/PCS, all ICD-9-CM and CPT/HCPCS coding. Utilizing her array of skills, she has provided training and mentoring for client staff, clinicians and her fellow coding professionals.

Karen has been a consultant in the healthcare industry since 2008. Her previous experience has allowed her to offer monthly education webinars for coders of various backgrounds and also lead and participate in client exit interviews with hospital administration to discuss the findings, observations and operational risk impacts. Attendees of those meetings often include compliance officers, compliance professionals, finance executives, HIM management and staff. Karen is also the sole proprietor of Elite Coding Services where she conducts on-site and remote MS-DRG, RAC, APC and CMS's Hierarchical Condition Categories ("HCC") audits; ICD-9, ICD-10 and CPT reviews of inpatient, outpatient, emergency room, evaluation, management and risk adjustment; and HCC physician office coding and billing. In a previous role, she created an HCC Risk Adjustment program for a large medical group, developed coding tips for use on an Independent Practice Association ("IPA") website and sourced a coding 'hotline.' She also possesses skills to conduct data analysis to identify trends with help from Information Technology experts.

Professional Designations and Affiliations:

- Registered Health Information Technician ("RHIT"), AHIMA
- Certified Coding Specialist ("CCS"), AHIMA
- Member, AHIMA

Education:

- Medical Record Technology Independent Study, AHIMA, Chicago, IL
- General Education/AHIMA CCS Certification, Cypress Community College, Cypress, CA