Welcome to the Information Session for the Health Information Technology Program. A few housekeeping details. I have muted everyone’s microphone – if you have a question please type it in the chat box and I will answer all the questions at the end of the session.
For the next few minutes I am going to discuss the HIM field and HIT program so that you will know if you are even interested in this profession.

The American Health Information Management Association says that **Health information management** (HIM) is the practice of acquiring, analyzing, and protecting digital and traditional medical information vital to providing quality patient care.

HIM professionals are highly trained in the latest information management technology applications and understand the workflow in any healthcare provider organization from large hospital systems to the private physician practice. They are vital to the daily operations management of health information and electronic health records.

I like to say that basically, HIM is everything in healthcare that does not involve actually touching the patient.
What is HIT?

TCC’s Health Information Technology (HIT) program provides a combination of medical knowledge and business applications to prepare graduates for administrative employment in hospitals, ambulatory health care facilities, physician practices, skilled nursing facilities and state or federal health agencies.

There are three levels of degree within the HIM field. The Associate Degree, Bachelor Degree, and Master’s Degree. The HIT program at TCC is at the Associate Degree level.

Health Information Technology is an area of specialization within the field of Health Information Management. Upon completion of this program you will be eligible to sit for the RHIT credential and become a Registered Health Information Technician. As an RHIT you will possess a combination of medical knowledge and business applications that will prepare you for administrative employment in hospitals, ambulatory health care facilities, physician practices, skilled nursing facilities and state or federal health agencies.
TCC’s HIT program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education – CAHIIM. Because we are CAHIIM accredited you can sit for your RHIT exam.
As HIM professionals, we are part of the American Health Information Management Association. The AHIMA is a national organization with over 101,000 members. Take some time to check out the AHIMA Student website. This is a fantastic website and it will really give you a good idea of what this career field has in store for you.
One of my favorite tools on the AHIMA student site is the Career Map.

HIM has a wide variety of job opportunities. You can see here on this career map there are 6 main areas of interest – Compliance/risk management, education/communication, informatics/data analysis, IT/infrastructure, Operations/medical records administration, and revenue cycle management/coding and billing. All of the dots on here represent types of jobs at different levels of skill and education. If you click on a dot it will show you all of the possible paths of advancement from that job.
For example – Here I clicked on the coder job and it showed me all of the potential pathways I could go to from a coder position
First it will give you a snapshot of the jobs and if you click full description
It will give a full description – including education, average salary etc. Please take time to check out this tool before you make your final decision to enter the HIT program.

Okay – so checking out the career field is something you need to do a really thorough job of BEFORE entering the program so you do not waste your time or money doing something you will not like. Let me clear up a few misconceptions real quick and then we will move on to the actual curriculum and the program here at TCC. First off – please note that generally, HIT professionals do not have direct patient contact. Sometimes you will have a job that requires you to interact with the healthcare consumer, but no HIT professional ever does patient care as part of their normal job. Secondly, many people go into the profession so they can work from home. While it is true that many in the HIM field do work from home, those individuals usually have 3-5 years of experience prior to working from home. So keep that in mind.

Okay – on to the program itself now.
In the HIT program at TCC we have three offerings - our HIT Associate in Applied Science, our One-year medical billing certificate, and our post-Associate degree add on certificate in eHIM.

The Medical Billing Certificate is completely separate from the HIT Associated Degree. I will touch on this certificate at the end of this presentation - but basically this one year certificate is completely focused on medical insurance billing. It is NOT a coding and billing certificate - it is just focused on billing. If you want to enter the field of coding then you will want to stick with the HIT Associate Degree. The eHIM certificate is NOT a stand alone certificate - it is meant to partner with the Associate in HIT to give you more skills in IT.
Online Program

Yes – you can do your work in your pajamas

MOST OF THE TIME

This is a fully online program. This is one of the hardest things for students to understand – what does it look like to be in an online program?

In this online program most of your interaction with your instructors over the computer – and most of the time that instruction is asynchronous, which means we are not having a live conversation, but instead you are pulling up recorded lectures or reading written instructions at a time that is different from each of your classmates.

Notice I said Most of the Time – that is because sometimes we do have live conversations – and those can take place over a webcam so you probably don’t want to be in your pajamas then.
Your courses are NOT self paced. There are due dates at regular intervals throughout the quarter, just like in a campus based class. Most courses are set up on a weekly basis with assignments due every week. Most courses have lectures every week as well. So - what is NOT going to happen is that you are given a whole slew of assignments that are all due at the end of the quarter. Instead - all of your assignments have specific due dates.

Every instructor sets up their class just a little bit differently, but here you can see an example of what you will experience.

So here is how it works. For every credit the class is you will interact with the online classroom. If you class if 5 credits then there will be 5 HOURS of interaction with the online class - meaning 5 hours on the computer. This 5 hour of interaction is SEPARATE from reading your textbook and doing your homework. The 5 hours of interaction may include things like lectures, labs, virtual field trips, discussions, virtual meetings, etc.
Sometimes you have to participate in real time – it may be that we are having a class discussion or maybe you are having trouble with a concept and need help. Either way, there will come a time when you have to actually speak to us – and we want you to know that we are real, live people who are here to work with you and help you.

There are many ways that you can talk to your instructor. We can skype or Go To Meeting or something like that. You can call us on the phone or use email. But please understand that the college functions on business hours – so faculty and computer help is not available 24/7.

Every one of your full time faculty members has office hours on campus – but we can also be reached by phone or skype during our office hours per your preference.
You WILL have to do some group work. Your group work will probably take place online and in an environment more like the picture to the bottom of the slide, - BUT sometimes groups decide to meet in person on campus so it is up to the group.
Professional Program

While we may never be in the same room together, we still work on the “soft skills” of the professional world and will require you to do work as such. This program does have heavy writing and presentation requirements. You will be asked to do presentations using a webcam – sometimes you will record these and sometimes they will be in front of a live audience with people on the other side of their computer screens. This program is WRITING INTENSIVE – Please be aware of that.

We expect you to be college level students. We expect you to have Writing and Math skills as per the pre-reqs for this program. Having your pre-reqs complete means more then that they just appear on your transcript – we expect you to actually have the skills learned in those courses in order to be successful.
This program is extremely time intensive. If you take full time classes it is equivalent to working a full time job with overtime. This program will consume your life for the next two years. It is a major commitment. We are talking 15-20 hours per week for one class – more if you want an A. If you are not ready to put everything you have into it then perhaps you should step back and wait until you are.

5 credit class =
5 hours in the online class
2-3 hours per credit on reading/homework
Total of 15-20 hours per week
More if you want an A
This is an online program – you need a reliable computer. You don’t get to miss an assignment due to a computer crash. Have a back up plan ready in case of an emergency. You need to have internet – you need to have speakers and you need to have a webcam with a microphone. You will be doing presentations in the class and we need to be able to see you and hear you.

There is a full listing of suggested requirements on TCC’s website and in your handbook.

TCC has a staff of eLearning experts that can help you if you run into problems – they are called the eLearning department. If you have an issue you need to log a ticket with them right away so you have proof in case you have trouble submitting an assignment or something (but again remember that a computer crash does not extend your due date).

Some of our software does not work with MAC computers – you can do some fancy tricks and make it work, but we don’t know how and cannot help you so chose a MAC at your own risk.
We have a ton of great resources through the college to help with your learning. The college has a writing and tutoring center, we have an etutoring center, the HIT program has HIT specific tutors available.
We have a dedicated space for students in building 13 room 341 (third floor) - it is open from 8-5 and to get in you need to check in with the secretary staff in building 13 and leave your ID. There are computers and class textbooks for you to use in the lab. You can also use it for study groups.
At the end of your program there is a professional practice experience where you get to practice all you have learned throughout the program. The experience is between 40 and 80 hours depending on your level of experience in HIM. You HAVE to do this so bank your vacation time now. If you use marijuana, which is perfectly legal in the state of Washington, then you will need to make plans to stop doing that the quarter before you go on your PPE because most of our sites do drug tests.

We do run background checks. If you have previous legal problems then here is what I can tell you:

- A criminal record does not keep you from doing your HIT courses
- A criminal record may or may not keep you from doing your PPE and you need your PPE to graduate
- Not all employers view criminal records the same. If your record has to do with fraud or theft then you will probably not find a job in this field as you will have access to people’s SSN. If your record has to do with assault then there will be some sites that are definitely out for you – like mental health and nursing homes – but other places might make an exception. The important thing is to be honest with employers and disclose your record and explain it. I cannot tell you 100% either way whether a record
will preclude you from employment – who knows what employers will decide in 2 years from now.
Let's go over the actual curriculum now. The program is a total of 106 credits, including the pre-reqs. This slide lists the pre-reqs. You must have all 4 of these courses – or their equivalent – and they must be completed prior to registering into the program. You can be in a pre-req at the time of the next quarter's registration – so for example you could be in BIOL 175 for summer and still register for Fall – with the caveat that if you do not pass the pre-req then you will be removed from the HIT program and not allowed to enter in Fall as you had planned.

You CANNOT take any of these pre-reqs at the same time you begin the HIT program – no exception.

You will notice BUS 110 has an asterisk here – beginning Fall 2016 the math pre-req will change to Math 146 – which is statistics.
Once you start the HIT program it is 6 quarters long – we have none of the core courses in the summer so it tends to run you 8 quarters to complete. These courses all build on each other – you must take of the HIT courses in order. It is possible to go part time, but it will make it very difficult and there may be quarters you have only one class or even no classes to take.

The first quarter of the HIT program include CU 103, HIT 110, HIT 125, and HIT 179. You are considered “in” the HIT program once you have successfully registered for HIT 110, 125, and 179. You can take CU 103 prior to starting the HIT program, but it MUST be taken prior to starting the second quarter as our HC stats class uses it.

HIT 179 is a seminar class and the same class runs each of the first three quarters. You will take this class three times – it will have recurring topics. HIT 179 has a required meeting time - look in the schedule for the required meeting time. You can take HIT 179 as a campus based class or an online class – but both sections have the same required meeting time. If you take the campus based section then you will come to campus and sit in a classroom with your peers and participate in the discussion in the same room as everyone – if you chose the online HIT 179 then you will come to
that same meeting, but through a web conference software – so you will still participate in the discussion. The seminar will NOT have assignments - there will be some readings you are asked to do to get ready to have a discussion, but not major reading. We will also have guest speakers join us during this time when they are available.

You will notice in quarter 4 and 5 you have HIT 279 instead of HIT 179 – same exact idea here – just now instead of ethical issues we will be discussing leadership issues - you will take 279 twice as each quarter will have a different focus on leadership for discussion.
We will offer some electives over the summer - because I know some of you need to go over the summer quarters. These are NOT required courses and serve to either give you additional certificates or additional skills.
Currently there is no application process to get into the HIT program. To begin the HIT program you must:

1. Have your pre-reqs complete
2. Register into HIT 110, 125, and 179 as space is available.

The pre-reqs for this program are English 101, BUS 110, BIO & 175, and HIT 105. If you have completed these pre-reqs as listed then you should NOT need an entry or override code and should register when your time allows. You should be able to find your registration time in your student portal. Make sure you are a registered student so you have access to your student portal. You may need an override or entry code to get into HIT 110, 125, and 179:

If you have not taken those exact pre-req classes, but have taken an equivalent approved by an advisor then please contact Char Gore cgore@tacomacc.edu for an override code.

If you are planning to begin the HIT program in Fall 2015, but are finishing up any of your pre-reqs in summer 2015 then register for summer first – this should allow you to then register for Fall.
For Fall registration only – because we added HIT 105 (medical terminology) as a pre-req late in the game we will allow you to take it concurrently for Fall 2015 – however this will make your Fall practically unbearable so if at all possible I would suggest taking HIT 105 in the summer. It will be offered this summer 2015.

And remember, you are using a computer to register – computers have gremlins – sometimes you do everything right and it still does not like you – so if you try to register and have all the appropriate pre-reqs but it still will not let you then please contact Char Gore cgore@tacomacc.edu for an override code.

If you are currently registered for any of your pre-reqs then the computer will consider this as meeting the pre-req requirement and will allow you to register into HIT 110, 125, and 179. Registering into them does not guarantee you are in them – you MUST pass your pre-reqs with a C or higher. We do go in and check and if you ended up receiving a grade lower than a C you will be withdrawn from the HIT courses.

If these classes fill then I suggest putting yourself on the wait list – last quarter we have 5 people move off the wait list and into the class by the time things were said and done.
The HIT program is extremely rigorous. It has to be. At the end of the program you will sit for a national exam. The AHIMA gives us a required set of curriculum to ensure that students are ready to pass that RHIT exam and join the workforce. There is a LOT of material to cover. Our students have historically performed at a high level on the national exam and we believe it is because of the way we have the program set up. You can see here that not only do we have a higher percentage of TCC students pass the RHIT exam than the national average, but also the score that TCC students get on their tests is higher than the national average. For example – in 2013-14 88% of our students who took the test for the first time passed it, while 71% of those nationwide passed it. In addition – our average score was 92.75 while the national average was 86.58.

Sitting for and passing the RHIT exam is extremely important to finding employment in this field. The HIT degree alone will not be enough – you need the RHIT credential. You need to understand that to get that credential you must sit for this exam. The exam is 4 hours long and 150 questions and is given through the AHIMA, not TCC. You go to a testing center to take the exam.
This is an add on certificate to the HIT Associate Degree. You can take courses for this certificate while taking your HIT courses if you run into a quarter where you need extra credits – especially if you are going part time. This certificate gives you increased IT skills. You will see many of the courses in this certificate are HIT courses so there is not that much more you need to do to receive this certificate.
We also have a Medical Billing Certificate for people who want to focus solely on medical insurance billing. This certificate does not ladder into the HITAPS program as the courses are completely different. Courses in the billing certificate may be labeled similarly to ones in the HIT program, however they are taught at a different level. For example, both the HIT Associate Degree program and the Medical Billing Specialist program have an outpatient procedure coding course. However the MO 159 outpatient procedure coding is not taught to the same level as the HIT 170 CPT course so the two are not equivalent. That is because the medical billing program does not require biology or physiology.

However – students who complete the HITAPS can also receive the Medical Billing Certificate by taking three additional courses – MO 110 Medical Office Procedures, MO 151 Billing, and MO 185 Billing Clinical.
Questions?