



Connecticut Coders Quarterly

Newsletter of the Connecticut Chapter of the AAPC

Fall 2002

Issue 5

Dear Connecticut Coders,

I hope everyone had an enjoyable summer! This will be our last Newsletter of 2002. I would like to thank the Newsletter committee for all of their contributions throughout the year. In addition, I would like to thank Tony Fusco for re-designing and maintaining the Chapter web site. The web site has become a great resource for many of us.

The elections for the 2003 officers will be held on November 6th. Please be sure to vote. If for any reason you cannot attend the meeting on November 6th, please contact an officer so that we can get an absentee ballot to you prior to November 6th. Corrine Gray, CPC will assume the office of President in January of 2003.

I have enjoyed my year as Chapter President very much. It did go by very quickly and it was a great pleasure to work with Corrine, Joyce, and Christine. In addition, the members of the Board were a great help to me this year; their guidance was invaluable to me and the other officers. Watching the Chapter grow and working with members (and non-members) towards their certification was truly a rewarding experience. Most of all, I would like to thank the membership for giving me the opportunity to serve the Chapter.

Sincerely,

Susan E. Smith, CPC
President, Connecticut Chapter



The SUN - Friend and Foe

By Corrine Gray, CPC, President Elect

Dr. David Leffell was the program speaker at the July Chapter meeting. He acknowledged to those in attendance that as the Director of the Yale Medical Group, he appreciates the importance of the AAPC and coding. As a leading dermatologist, Dr. Leffell's presentation was on skin cancer.

We all need sunshine's vitamin D but there is a downside to enjoying the sun and it is called skin cancer. Skin cancer can be caused by sun exposure and exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays from artificial sources, such as tanning beds or sunlamps.

The most common types of skin cancers are basal cell, squamous cell and melanoma, melanoma being the most lethal. Approximately 51,000 people are diagnosed annually and it will be fatal to 7,000 of those.

High skin cancer rates have a geographic correlation with people living close to the equator. Australia has the highest skin cancer rates in the world and it is a major public focus. Public school teachers are subject to financial penalties when students are outside without appropriate sun protection. Actinic keratosis is not a skin cancer but may indicate sun-damaged skin and a predisposition to skin cancer. Treatment involves freezing, scraping, dynamic light therapy and topical medications.

Basal cell cancers rarely metastasize. If a basal cell cancer recurs, it can be worse since those cells survived early treatment.

Squamous cell tumors tend to occur on portions of sun-exposed areas such as ears and can metastasize. Basal and squamous cell cancers are more likely to occur in individuals of light complexion who have had significant exposure to sunlight.

Melanoma skin cancer is the most serious. Melanoma has the highest cure rate if only the epidermis is affected. Anything more invasive can be lethal. Melanoma tends to occur under the fingernails, toenails or on the palms or soles in people with dark skin.

Treatment options vary. Mohs micrographic surgery is used on large or recurrent skin cancer where cosmetic results are important. It also has the highest cure rate, preserves tissue, is office based and the most cost efficient. Other options include surgical excision, scraping and burning, and topical medications.

Learning the signs and symptoms of skin cancer is very important. Thinking of ABCD can help you remember what to watch for in skin cancers:

See *The Sun* on page 2

The Sun cont.

- Asymmetry - shape of one half does not match the other
- Border - edges often ragged, notched, irregular outline
- Color – uneven color, shades of black, brown, and tan may be present as well as areas of white, gray, red, pink or blue
- Diameter – change in size

Appropriate protection is critical.

- Use sunscreen with SPF of 15-30, reapplied every couple of hours (active ingredient parasol 1789)
- Wear protective clothing
- Wear a full hat
- Put sunscreen on kids, 85% of sun exposure is acquired by 18 years old
- Have full body skin exam once a year (by a dermatologist)
- Learn to examine yourself for any new or changing moles
- When in doubt, check it out!

When you do inadvertently experience a minor sunburn you can usually treat it at home with:

- Aspirin
- Tepid bath at 84 degrees
- Oatmeal bath
- Cool room
- Moisturizer – nonalcoholic

And, you can read Dr. Leffell's book, Total Skin.

Ready, Set, Comply, Games, Quizzes, and E-mails for Fun and Easy Compliance Training

Book authored by Judy L. Harris, CPC, Opus Communications, Inc., Subsidiary of HCPro Corp. 2002.

Book Review by Tony Fusco

Judy Harris's new book is a valuable resource for corporate compliance officers or compliance training staff to create effective training programs. It is a concise soft covered collection of information and ideas that can be useful and applied to make compliance education in health care facilities fun and memorable.

Judy has been the Director Of Compliance at the Yale Medical Group since 1997 and has worked for several Medicare contractors in the fraud and abuse and medical review areas for 20 years. She is a member of the Connecticut AAPC and is also a paralegal. The sample questions and examples in the

book were developed following OIG (Office of the Inspector General) and Medicare program guidelines.

The book's format is broken down into four main areas: *Employee-Specific Training Topics, Training Formats, Strategies and Tips for Effective Compliance Training, and a CD-Rom* which contains a year's supply of cut and paste e-mail training questions.

The first section contains an overview and helps you to identify the personnel who need compliance training. There are sample training questions and answers and information as to what target group this information is intended for. It also contains a list of "High Risk" areas and important questions that need to be asked and answered concerning your "compliance environment." There are explanations of what information and why it should be covered as well as important focal points to concentrate on.

The second section contains an inventory of educational methods including sample games, tools and multimedia applications. It includes how to prepare for a training session, resource web sites, source publications, the importance of record keeping and having a newsletter.

The *Strategies and Tips* section explains how to evaluate the effectiveness of your training and how to fine tune your "training survival" skills. The CD-Rom contains 12 months worth of email questions, one each week can easily be cut and pasted into an e-mail and sent to staff to keep them up to date and to review important compliance issues.

The book can be found at:

<http://www.hcmarketplace.com/Prod.cfm?id=1269>

What the HECK Is That?

A column for unique diagnoses

By Irma Reyes



West Nile Fever 066.4

As we quickly approach time for reviewing the new changes and updates in ICD-9 2003, please take note of the new diagnosis codes that will be in effect as of October 1, 2002.

West Nile Fever is the unique diagnosis, having its own diagnosis code this upcoming year.

CMS will allow you to view those updates at:

www.cms.hhs.gov/medlearn/icd9code.asp

See *What the HECK* on page 3

What the HECK cont.

We have heard a lot of discussion regarding the West Nile virus over the summer. The West Nile virus is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito, presenting a threat to human and animal health.

West Nile fever is usually a mild disease in people who have symptoms much like the flu. West Nile Fever is spread by mosquito bites and cannot be spread from human to human or animal to human. The virus has to incubate inside the mosquito's salivary glands to infect humans and animals. The incubation period is usually 3-14 days after being bitten. The symptoms are fever, headache and body aches much like the flu. In some cases, people can develop a skin rash and swollen lymph nodes.

Preventing mosquito bites will prevent West Nile virus infection and West Nile Fever. Taking precautions such as wearing long sleeve shirts and long pants when outdoors or camping, using insect repellents, and screening your home to prevent mosquito entry can reduce or prevent mosquito bites.

Check again for the What the Heck Is That column in our next AAPC chapter Newsletter!

Bulletin Board

Upcoming Meetings

November 6, 2002 – Wednesday

8:15 – 10 a.m.

Location: Brady Auditorium, Yale University
310 Cedar Street, New Haven

Speaker: Christine Vogel, Deputy Director
Office of Managed Care Ombudsman,
State of Connecticut

Topic: Managed Care Health Plans

CEUs: 1.5

****Election of Connecticut Chapter Officers for 2003 ****

A social meeting is in the works for Chapter members to celebrate the Holidays - a notice will be sent out but you can always check the website.

Please RSVP for meetings at least 3 days prior to the meeting so handouts and refreshments can be ordered. Also be sure to sign in and indicate if you are a CPC – it is important to ensure you receive your ceu's.

2003 Nominees for Chapter Officers

We would like to take this opportunity to familiarize the Chapter with the nominees for the 2003 officers. Please refer to the Chapter web site for more detailed information on each candidate. The elections for the 2003 officers will be held during the November 6, 2002 Chapter meeting. Only Chapter members who have paid their 2002 Chapter dues are eligible to vote. If you cannot attend the meeting and wish to cast your vote, please contact one of the current officers to make arrangements for an absentee ballot. All absentee ballots must be received by the Chapter by the close of business on Tuesday, November 5, 2002.

President-Elect:

Brenda Dombkowski, CPC
Obstetrics-Gynecology & Infertility Group, P.C.
New Haven, CT

President-Elect:

Theresa Griffith-Turcio, RN, CPC
Senior Compliance Auditor
Yale Medical Group

Secretary:

Dawn Gilbert, CPC
Clinical Practice Specialist
Yale University School of Medicine
Department of Pediatrics

Treasurer:

Joyceann L. Dupee, CPC
Clinical Practice Specialist
Yale University School of Medicine
Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology



Officers:
President – Susan E. Smith, CPC
President-Elect – Corrine Gray, CPC
Secretary – Joyce Dupee, CPC
Treasurer – Christine Hoyt, CPC

Newsletter Staff:
Joyce Dupee, CPC, Editor
Bev Bakes, CPC
Lynn Festa, CPC
Tony Fusco
Irma Reyes
Susan E. Smith, CPC
Pat Waleski, CPC

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Please visit the website of the Connecticut Chapter of the AAPC at
www.ctaapc.org