



Jennifer Dydo-Spencer, BA, RHIA, CCS

Jennifer Dydo-Spencer is a 2017 Graduate of Monroe Community College, Rochester N.Y. (M.C.C) Health Information Management program. After postponing her career to raise her children she decided to go back to school and obtain another degree. Her first degree, a Bachelor's in Music, from S.U.N.Y Fredonia was completed before she married. Jenn felt it was the right thing to be a stay at home mother, and raise her children. She even home-schooled her youngest. It is a decision she would make again if she had too. Her family comes first and most important to her.

While her children were small, Jenn was a waitress for 13 years working nights and weekends. As the children got older and got more involved in sports and other curricular activities, she felt she was missing out on being present for their activities, so she took a day job working for a student loan company call center. After seven years doing that, her husband was offered a position in San Francisco. It was a good move for him, but not the kids, who were in high school and would soon be graduating. The decision was for Jenn to stay behind with the kids so as to not disrupt their education or lives.

While her husband was in San Francisco, Jenn continued to work at the call center, and soon became a call center supervisor. The job at the call center was fine, yet she wanted to find a job that would allow her to work from home, and after doing some research decided that medical coding was such a job, and found out that Monroe Community College offered coding courses in their HIM program. Jenn was surprised to find that she would also have to take anatomy and physiology, medical terminology, and record management classes, but enjoyed them along with all her other courses in the HIM program.

Jennifer started as a part-time student in the HIM program at MCC, while continuing to work 32 hours a week at the call center, and keeping things running at home as best as she could. By the time she entered her 2nd year in the program, her husband had established himself well enough in his new position that he was able to transfer back to Rochester. The children were getting ready to graduate from high school at about that time also. This enabled Jennifer to leave the

job at the call center and work as a student-aid for the remainder of the year at MCC. In addition, Jennifer received the following awards while a student at MCC:

- NYHIMA Outstanding Student Award
- NYHIMA Returning Student Award
- Local RRHIMA Award
- AHIMA Foundation Award (Lynn Kuehn)

After Jen completed the HIM program at MCC, she found that coding was not top on her list of jobs to pursue, even though it was what drew her to the program. In spite of that, before graduating, she took a position as a coder URMĆ's Thompson Hospital. She sat for her RHIT and CCS exams just before graduation and passed both. After graduating from MCC a HIM job opportunity opened up for her near home at the Warsaw Hospital in Warsaw, NY, just outside of Rochester NY; so she left Thompson's to join Warsaw Hospital. Because Jenn already had a bachelor's degree, she was able to take advantage of the current AHIMA proviso that allows individuals with an RHIT and a bachelor's degree in anything to sit for the RHIA exam. So, she did that recently and passed!

Jennifer recently became the Inpatient Coding Manager for Rochester Regional Health. Her greatest challenge in taking on the role as a manager is that she so recently graduated and does not have much experience in the field. However, she knows that she possesses the skills, education and the eagerness to learn from seasoned administrators. Jennifer plans to stay abreast of all the nuances and changes in the HIM field. She is very excited about the opportunity that has been given her to show what she can do. Working in this capacity is a personal goal of hers.

Jennifer's inspiration to do what she does each day is from networking and school. She is inspired by others in the field and their generosity in sharing knowledge of what they have learned in their careers. Jennifer feels this is the time for her to do something for herself after raising her family.

Experiencing the sense of community in HIM, was pleasantly surprising to her while attending state conferences. She also found that being exposed to coding daily has also caused her to discover how much she loves coding. If she were to share some advice to someone thinking of going into the HIM field it would be "Just do it". One of her personal inspirational favorites is "There is a reason why the front window is so large and the rearview mirror is so small because your future is big and bright and the rearview mirror is your past never dwelling on it but learning from it".

In her spare time, Jennifer enjoys hanging out with her best friend, her husband, and her family. They particularly enjoy going to professional baseball games. They are fans of the NY Mets. They also travel whenever possible.