



Tara Dixon, RHIT

Tara was working as a waitress but desired to do something more with her life, so she decided to go to college. It was while thumbing through MCC's catalogue that she came upon Health Information Management. It covered her check list -- organization, coding and management -- just a few of the jobs that HIM includes. She knew that she wanted to be involved in patient care, but like many who find their way to HIM, she did not want to be hands on. Tara graduated from the Monroe Community College (MCC) Health Information program In 2013, and soon after earned her RHIT credential. She says that the friendships she created at school have continued and have provided networking possibilities for jobs.

Presently she is employed at Elizabeth Wende Breast Care (EWBC) Imaging Center in Rochester NY. Her position is to interpret, transcribe and edit speech recognition dictation by the physicians and the Genetics Department. The types of transcription reports that she works with include patient assessments, workups, therapeutic procedures and clinical follow-up; all of which document patient care and facilitate health care delivery. She finds her job of assisting

with verifying documentation of test results and the doctor's documentation very important, both for the medical record itself and for billing.

Prior to working for EWBC, Tara worked for Cayuga Centers, a registered no-profit organization most known for their work with unaccompanied migrant children and trauma. She worked at the Monroe Youth and Family Center that focused on-behavioral health care for young adults. At the Center, the Medical Record Department was in a small room that lacked organization. It seemed daunting to her at first, but she was able to orchestrate what was needed and purchased everything from shelving to file folders to labels. She created an electronic database to keep track of patient records when they were out and when they were returned. Her primary focus was keeping track of Counselor's and Psychiatrist's assessments and treatment plans. She had to check for deficiencies and make sure they signed and completed them when needed. She also handled all the release of information (RIO) requests.

Tara went on to work for Cayuga's "Continuous Quality Improvement Department" in Auburn, New York. She continued to take care of the ROI requests for the office in Auburn NY, as well as in Rochester NY. She worked 1 day a week in Rochester, and 4 days a week in Auburn. Her title was File Specialist. Tara was also involved with auditing charts for grant renewals. She was selected to go to New York City and organize the Medical Record Department at the Office for Detained Children's "foster care program" for unaccompanied migrant children. One of the biggest challenges was the language barrier. The children are from countries of Spanish origin, and Tara cannot speak Spanish. Once she was able to get the Medical Record Department up and running, she educated the staff on the policy and procedures for the Medical Record Department. She utilized the help of staff to get the records created and filed. She then trained the secretaries on how to create a chart for new patients. Tara updated and rewrote agency policies so the Center could maintain its accreditation. She wrote policy and procedures for open and closed records. She audited the charts making sure progress notes and other parts of the medical record were complete.

It seems to Tara that her job duties were the same wherever she went. She jokingly said that she felt like a magnet that attracted her to those jobs. She would return to the New York office

3 times after the Medical Record Department was up and running to audit the charts and do some R.O.I. She also followed up and interacted with staff in other programs about new or revised procedures.

From 2015 – 2018 she worked for St. Johns Home; a 450-bed nursing home and rehabilitation hospital. While working in their Medical Record Department she says she coordinated meetings, tracked and edited facility-wide policies and procedures for administration and H.I.M. She also coded admissions, but she was able to hire a coder to take on the job of coding when it started to take too much time away the tasks that she felt made better use of her skills and talent. She purged charts, worked with the vendor for off-site storage, maintained provider credentialing files, oversaw death certificate completion, and even participated in the hiring process for H.I.M. Another important task was making sure that the discharge information sent to the residents' primary care physicians and home health agencies were completed thoroughly. She oversaw the staff that assigned and updated the codes on the residents' diagnosis lists.

What Tara feels is the most rewarding about working in our profession is gaining a variety of opportunities to create processes, organize an entire Medical Record Department, and being able to grow as a professional. If she were to give advice to a person considering a career in H.I.M., it would be that this is a field that is here to stay and its not going away. It has a lot of potential. It is also a good field in the medical profession to consider for those that do not want to do hands on care.

As for what Tara does in her spare time for enjoyment, she said it is playing disc golf and Poker “Texas Holden”.