

WHAT IS THE CPC EXAM?

MAKEUP OF THE TEST

- Administered by the American Association of Professional Coders (AAPC)
 - The AAPC is the largest and most well-regarded professional association of coders
- 150 Multiple-choice questions
- Takes five hours, 40 minutes to complete
- You must earn a 70% to pass (105 questions correct)



MAKEUP OF THE TEST, CONT.

- Test is **open-book** (you may bring the ICD, CPT, and HCPCS manuals)
 - You may write whatever notes you wish in these books, but you **cannot paste or tape** anything into them
- Costs **\$260** for AAPC members, and **\$300** for non-members
 - AAPC membership is **\$125** for individuals, and **\$70** for students



AREAS OF FOCUS

- CPC Exam covers 24 subject areas

Anesthesia	Radiology
Medicine	Nervous System
Endocrine System	Digestive System
Urinary System	Musculoskeletal System
Evaluation and Management	Anatomy and Physiology
Mediastinum and Diaphragm	Practice Management

AREAS OF FOCUS, CONT.

Male/female Genital	Hemic and Lymphatic
Maternity and Delivery	Eye and Ocular Adnexa
ICD-9-CM	HCPCS Level II
Coding Guidelines	Medical Terminology
Pathology	Integumentary
Respiratory	Laboratory

TYPES OF QUESTIONS

- Questions are **not** divided or identified by their subject areas
 - There is no “Anesthesia” section to the exam, for example
- Many questions will be in the form of test cases

TYPES OF QUESTIONS, CONT.

- Example: “Sarah, a 45-year-old patient, visits the doctor and presents symptoms including a sore throat, swollen lymph nodes, and a fever. After performing a rapid strep test, the doctor confirms a diagnosis of streptococcal sore throat. The doctor prescribes an Amoxicillin as an antibiotic. Which of the following are the correct codes for this diagnosis, procedure and prescription?”
- You will be asked to pick the best answer out of the four answers listed

TYPES OF QUESTIONS, CONT.

- You will also see general knowledge questions
 - Example: “What type of joints are synovial?”
- Your job on every question is to pick the best answer out of the given options

GETTING CERTIFIED

- To become a **CPC**, you need to pass the CPC exam *and* have **two years** professional coding experience
 - Coders who pass the CPC without two years professional experience earn an Apprentice certification (CPC-A; we'll talk about this in The CPC Apprentice Program in section 5)
- You **must** also be a member of the **AAPC**



PREPARING FOR THE CPC EXAM

- The AAPC offers a number of prep materials, including study guides, instructional courses, and practice exams
- Many of these are expensive, but a few (like their Anatomy and Physiology course, their Study Guide, and their practice exams, are well worth it)
- You can look at the AAPC's study materials here: www.aapc.com/training/cpc-exam-preparation.aspx

PREPARING FOR THE CPC EXAM, CONT.

- You can also take a third-party “crash course”
 - Several of these are offered online

