

The Swedish Society of Clinical Coders  
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## Development of Clinical Coders Society in Sweden

### Accuracy in coding of clinical data

Sweden started implementation of the ICD coding system for inpatient hospital stays 1951. From the beginning both diagnoses in text and their ICD coding were performed by clinicians when writing discharge summaries. Several studies have shown the coding quality to be suboptimal.

January 2000, an experimental pilot project were launched in the County Council Västra Götaland (around Gothenburg, Western Sweden) to train experienced medical secretaries to become clinical coders by giving them an advanced level University course in ICD-10 coding.

The course included ICD-10 coding “by the book”, health law and regulations, and basic statistics with training in patient database analyses to be used in a variety of reports for clinical and administrative purposes.

There has been a great interest outside the County Council for education in Clinical coding, and diverse training models has been developed. The common feature, however, is a three months’ course in ICD-10 coding.

After two courses in ICD-coding in the County Council Västra Götaland the secretaries decided to form a society for Clinical Coders and established contact with the Swedish Medical Secretaries Union how to create a formal organization. The secretaries decided to form a Society for Clinical Coders in September, 2001 and the elected executive committee started to work with logotype, website, education and workshops in ICD-10 coding matters. The aim is to standardize and improve the quality of diagnosis coding to create a better basis for statistical analyses, standardized basis for reimbursement through DRG and to diminish the burden of administrative workload for clinicians. The executive committee had also been given the task of looking into the matter of Code of Ethics. Try to find We found on websites for NCCH (National Centre for Classification of Health in Australia) as well as CCSA (Clinical Coders Society of Australia) standards of coding practice including ethical practice - coders creed and started to develop guidance.

The Swedish Society of Clinical Coders decided at an annual meeting that the developed Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice to define the principles governing the conduct of its members as current rules. Every member of the Swedish Society of Clinical Coders shall abide to the Code of Ethics and Practice Standards to promote the objectives of being a clinical coder. Any action which is in violation with the spirit and purpose of this code shall be considered unethical.

### Code of Ethics

The Clinical Coder has a skill and working knowledge of medical science and terminology and shall assists clinicians in making decisions about the appropriate codes to assign. The Clinical Coder will communicate and cooperate with colleagues to secure correct and consistant interpretation of coding rules.



The Clinical Coder makes sure that coding is based on documentation in the medical record and shall consult the clinicians when appropriate.

Selection of main condition (primary reason for care) is done in accordance with Classification guidelines provided by The Swedish Board of Health and Welfare.

## Practice Standards

Clinical Coders:

- ◆ Shall not misrepresent or falsify their education, qualifications or experience and not make speak in the name of the Society outside their realm of knowledge
- ◆ Shall refuse to participate in fraudulent or unethical acts or processes
- ◆ Will not code with the purpose of maximizing reimbursement by upcoding, nor add or alter codes against classification rules to increase reimbursement by canged casemix allocation
- ◆ Support and assist managers and clinicians in guidelines and practices that support ethical coding. (ICD-10 code for primary reason for care are not to be chosen from DRG-weight)
- ◆ Participate in quality improvement activities to ensure that quality of coding is maintained
- ◆ Initiate and maintain communication with other health care professionals and relevant organisations to improve development in quality and accuracy of coding
- ◆ Liaise with other professional bodies in order to strive for advancement of quality health care
- ◆ Maintaine the integrity of the Swedish Society of Clinical Coders and not make unsanctioned representation on behalf of the society

The development of a Clinical Coder Profession within the society will also create a new chance for development for the Administrative Medical Secretary. There is still some controversy regarding shifting the responsibility of clinical coding from clinicians to a profession of clinical coders, but the interest for this issue is greatly increasing, not only within the profession itself but also among bureaucrats and politicians.

The Executive Committee of Clinical Coders Society in Sweden:

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