



Continuing Education, Outreach & E-Learning
5602 Research Park Boulevard, Suite 300
Madison, WI 53719-1245
608-262-1034
608-262-8205 (fax)
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NEWS RELEASE

University of Wisconsin—Extension and Four UW Campuses Collaborate to Fill a Need in the State's Healthcare Industry

MADISON, Wis. – (April 2, 2012) – A newly approved online program gives Wisconsin students the opportunity to earn a degree in one of the fastest growing professions – health information. The new online Bachelor of Science in Health Information Management and Technology (HIMT) is offered by a consortium of four University of Wisconsin campuses and coordinated by the University of Wisconsin-Extension. Students can receive their degrees through UW-Green Bay, UW-Parkside, and UW-Stevens Point. In addition, UW-La Crosse will contribute courses. Applications for fall 2012 are currently being accepted at <http://himt.wisconsin.edu>. It is the only HIMT degree in the UW System.

"This is a very timely degree. The employment outlook is extremely positive for highly skilled professionals in the health information management and technology field," said David Schejbal, dean of the UW-Extension's online and continuing education division. "The new program addresses the state's shortage of 4-year degree holders in this field."

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of medical records and health information technicians is expected to increase 20 percent by 2018, much faster than the average for all occupations.

Jane Duckert, director of health information management at University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics, said, "Healthcare programs, electronic medical records and health information exchange are growing in number, size and complexity. Technological advancements require additional and expanded training for the profession. A degree program within Wisconsin will keep our state on the cutting edge of technology with its credentialed health information management professionals."

The HIMT program offers two tracks to prepare students for careers in health information management and health information technology. The technology track prepares students for IT roles in the healthcare, health insurance and governmental fields. It's the foundation for positions from health data analysis to insurance claims coordinator. The management track prepares students to be leaders in providing better patient care, administering computer information systems and managing patient information.

Online Degree is Geared Toward Nontraditional Students

Courses are fully online, and returning students who have already completed the first 60 credits of undergraduate work or have an associate degree can complete the program in as little as two years. The curriculum consists of 20 classes (60 total credits) and covers such topics as health and medical terminology, medical ethics, information technology in healthcare, health benefit plans and providers, and leadership and change management in healthcare.

"This unique collaboration recognizes the state's need to grow its pool of IT professionals," said Dan McCarty, academic director at UW-Stevens Point. "Without the collaboration, one campus alone would not have had the resources to offer a degree like this."

The HIMT program is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. For more information please visit <http://himt.wisconsin.edu>.

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Contact:

Anna Schryver
University Relations
Continuing Education, Outreach & E-Learning
University of Wisconsin-Extension
608.225.5476
anna.schryver@uwex.edu