CDI requires a love of learning

by Linnea Archibald

I always loved school. In fact, I still love learning. Digging into the intricacies of a topic and synthesizing them to present through writing truly delights me. That’s what makes my role at ACDIS so fun. All of us on the ACDIS team are constantly learning, constantly adapting, constantly digesting information as we go.

From my limited three-and-a-half years working with folks in the CDI profession, I can say with confidence that you share my love of learning. Otherwise, you likely wouldn’t have been drawn to the field in the first place. While CDI professionals from all backgrounds bring unique skill sets and areas of expertise to their role—from coding and HIM knowledge to patient care experience—there’s always room to learn more. I can’t even count the number of times Journal sources and ACDIS friends have told me they learn something new every day.

To celebrate this love of learning, we’ve dedicated this entire edition of the Journal to CDI education efforts.

As you flip through the 40-odd pages making up this edition, you’ll find articles suited for all CDI program development stages and program types. For those looking to advance their educational efforts while dealing with tight budgetary restraints, flip to p. 8 and read the article Associate Editor Carolyn Riel put together on the topic. ACDIS members can also leverage items contained in the Resource Library to help educate their staff without making any additional purchases.

Many facilities have also chosen to employ full-time CDI educators, conducting their education in-house. I had the privilege of speaking to three educators for this edition and getting their take on the role and what it brings to a CDI team. If your department could use the dedicated efforts of an educator, turn to p. 23 and read their advice.

A large part of educating CDI staff is making sure they’re engaged in their roles and don’t get burnt out. On p. 30, several ACDIS members weigh in on ways to offer staff flexible schedules for improving work-life balance and overall contentment in their professional walk.

Since so much of CDI’s work centers around engaging physicians, we’ve also included two feature-length articles on the topic of physician education. Echoing ACDIS’ earlier case study written in conjunction with the Advisory Board’s Provider Engagement Series, Riel spoke to
two professionals who have chosen to clinically integrate their departments and introduce collaborative tactics such as participating in rounds to increase physician engagement. That article can be found on p. 14.

Riel also spoke to two physician advisors about their roles, giving CDI professionals insight into building an advisor program of their own. This model capitalizes on the benefit of peer-to-peer physician education, and the article outlines all the ways an advisor can make a difference. Those interested in developing a physician advisor role themselves, or those who may just need to revamp their existing role, should give this article a read on p. 33.

This edition also contains several guest columns offering perspectives on physician education. Frequent guest columnist Howard Rodenberg, MD, MPH, CCDS, provides a column about the research-backed outcomes of resident physician CDI education efforts based on information shared during the 2019 ACDIS conference poster presentations (see p. 12). Trey LaCharité, MD, FACP, SFHM, CCS, CCDS, is also back in this edition’s “Physician Advisor’s Corner” on p. 36 offering his best physician education pearls. And Cathy Farraher Nakhoul, RN, BSN, MBA, CCM, CCDS, shares the education tips she’s learned while working in CDI during the COVID-19 pandemic on p. 27.

Those looking to brush up on their clinical and coding knowledge also have the opportunity to do so with this edition. On the coding side of things, our very own CDI Education Specialist Sharme Brodie, RN, CCDS, CCDS-O, unpacks the ICD-10-PCS Section X instructions for new technology use on p. 40, and then on p. 38, Sarah Nehring, CCS, CCDS, covers seven things coders want physicians to know about acute blood loss anemia. On the clinical side of things, Alba Kuqi, MD, CCS, CDIP, CCDS, CRCR, CICA, CSCI, unpacks the intricacies of ischemic heart disease and shares valuable physician documentation tips for this condition on p. 19.

There are so many opportunities to learn in this edition. I know you love learning just like we do on the ACDIS team, so I hope you’ll enjoy all the issue has to offer. Remember, if you have a question, don’t be afraid to reach out and ask the ACDIS team or your peers on the Forum. Even if we don’t know the answer immediately, as one of the CDI professionals represented in this issue said, we learn something the best when we have to teach it.

Zina Verhulst