



MEET A MEMBER

Triathlon athlete loves continued learning

Melinda Scharf, RN, BSN, CCDS, CCS, regional clinical documentation integrity educator at St. Joseph Hospital in Irvine, California, has worked in CDI since 2008 after serving as a pediatric nurse for 10 years and an ER nurse for 11.

CDI Journal: *Why did you get into this line of work?*

Scharf: A friend who was a case manager told me about the job. The hospital was starting a new program, and it sounded interesting. I really didn't understand exactly what it was at the time!

CDI Journal: *What has been your biggest challenge?*

Scharf: The lack of physician engagement. There has been more support over the years, but it is still a big problem.

CDI Journal: *What has been your biggest reward?*

Scharf: The learning continues on a day-to-day basis and will never end. The opportunity to work with a great team and the opportunity to impact the new clinical documentation specialists that are entering the field.

CDI Journal: *How has the field changed since you began working in CDI?*

Scharf: It is apparent that the CDI profession is growing and the number of experts in the field has grown tremendously. The annual ACDIS Conference agenda gets better every year with more content. The implementation of the EMR has changed the process a lot.

CDI Journal: Can you mention a few of the “gold nuggets” of information you’ve received from colleagues on “CDI Talk” or through ACDIS?

Scharf: As an educator, I frequently refer to articles on the ACDIS website as a resource. I have referred to Dr. Richard Pinson’s article on respiratory failure many times. We use the *CDI Pocket Guide* as a resource for our staff. I used the ACDIS position paper on Sepsis-3 to help guide our staff on handling the new sepsis definition. Dr. Robert S. Gold was very helpful when I was having trouble advising our team on whether to assign a Glasgow Coma Scale score in a patient with hepatic encephalopathy.

CDI Journal: What are some of the high points from the 2016 ACDIS Conference?

Scharf: Vicki Hess was great as the keynote speaker. I think I will always remember “replace your pow with a wow!” Because we are a multi-facility health system, the conference gives us a chance to all spend time together. It is fun meeting other people in the industry and hearing their views. There are some people that I only see at the conference.

CDI Journal: What piece of advice would you offer to a new CDI specialist?

Scharf: Research and understand every diagnosis you are asking for. If you earn the doctor’s respect, this will be half your battle. And don’t get discouraged!

CDI Journal: If you could have any other job, what would it be?

Scharf: I’d be a horse trainer.

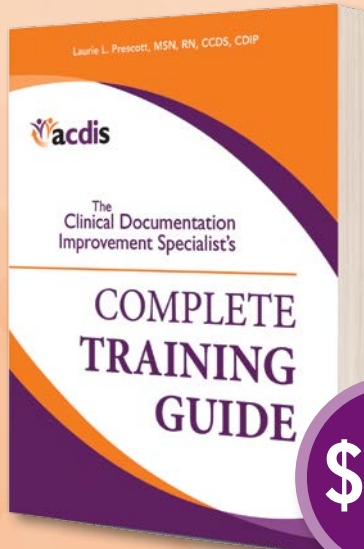
CDI Journal: What was your first job (what you did while in high school)?

Scharf: “Busgirl” at a restaurant. I think I made \$2.65 per hour!

Here are a few of Melinda’s favorite things:

- Vacation spots: I like to go to different places. Nashville was one of my favorite spots. I also loved Ireland and New Zealand!
- Hobbies: Triathlons have been taking up most of my free time recently, Los Angeles Angels baseball, and I enjoy reading a lot. Horses have been a lifelong hobby when I can afford it.
- Non-alcoholic beverage: Bulletproof coffee
- Foods: Anything sweet, but I am always trying to change that
- Activity: Swimming, biking, and running
- Family: I have three great (of course) adult children. I am impatiently waiting for grandkids! 🌈

Editor’s note: If you know a CDI specialist who’d love a moment in the ACDIS spotlight, please nominate him or her by sending ACDIS Editor Katherine Rushlau an email at krushlau@acdis.org.



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