

**Kelly Kelsey – medical coder extraordinaire!**

It was the best of times. It was the worst of times... for this hard-working mother of three to find herself at Medical Coding Boot Camp. Yes, *boot camp*.

"This is the most stressful thing I've ever done," says Kelli, who recently earned her Certified Professional Coder title. "I went through extensive training for five days in Portland — eight hours of class and two hours of homework each night. When I came home I had one month to study for the exam."

And work and care for her family and home at the same time. No big deal, right? Well consider that Kelli had to have a thorough working knowledge of anatomy and medical terminology, plus memorize the intricate details of two coding books — one for procedures and the other for diagnosis.

"It's a lot to know. The diagnosis book is updated two times each year and the procedure book is updated once a year, so things are changing all the time. I'm constantly keeping up."

So what does a coder do?

"Insurance companies need both a procedure code and a diagnosis code before they will pay us for a procedure," explains Kelli. "My job is to know the guidelines and rules of coding so that we get reimbursed in full." So she consults her books, reads lots of dictation, reads through notes and works closely with the docs to ensure things are done well.

"It's a good feeling to handle a big surgical case, which is very complicated, and see that we got paid in full for all the work we did. It means I'm doing my job right."

Although Kelli's office is located at the clinic, clinical coding is a small part of her duties. "Hospital billing takes most of my time," she says. "Brenda Guhlke is also a certified coder. She codes all the facilities use for the hospital and nursing home. I code all the physician services for the ER, acute care in-patient and nursing home too. " Hence the need for such extensive medical knowledge.

"I like it. I learn something new every day."