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NEMT president Linda Allard named AHDI Advocate of the Year

WOOLWICH, MAINE: On July 24, Linda Allard, president of the Maine-based medical transcription firm NEMT won the prestigious Advocate of the Year award by the Association for Healthcare Documentation Integrity (AHDI), the national clinical documentation organization.

The industry's top advocacy award serves to recognize an individual for outstanding activities related to advancement of the healthcare documentation profession. CEO and owner Linda Sullivan was on hand at AHDI's national convention (ACE 2014) in Las Vegas where the award was announced.

"We're extremely proud of Linda and her efforts on behalf of the industry," Sullivan said. "She works tirelessly to promote awareness of clinical documentation issues, information security and education. We're very pleased that AHDI has recognized her value to the industry."



Allard's passion and goal has always been to help create job opportunities for others and to ensure that those jobs are fair and beneficial to workers. Allard has been a supporter of the industry since 1987. She has contributed to many advocacy-related projects, including lobbying Congress on behalf of the industry, teaching, participating on an advisory board, presenting credit-worthy continuing education sessions, publishing papers and other works on HIPAA, initiating a voice recognition training program for students, and creating an externship program for clinical documentation students.

"This is really a huge honor," Allard said. "AHDI has always been a preeminent force in the healthcare field and I'm thrilled and humbled by their recognition."

In addition, Allard's accomplishments include:

- Lobbying Congress on behalf of the industry



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- Helping launch a transcription program through the Virginia Community College Workforce Alliance
- Teaching transcription classes at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College
- Sitting on the Advisory Board of ECPI Technical College
- Obtaining a Certified in Healthcare Privacy and Security (CHPS) credential
- Presenting CEC classes at seminars and conventions for AHDI members
- Publishing papers and other works on HIPAA, education and employee relations
- Creating an externship program for clinical documentation students
- Initiating a voice recognition training program for students
- Ensuring all NEMT personnel are educated and trained in HIPAA with CEC credits
- Providing reimbursements to all NEMT personnel for the cost of obtaining CMT credentials

Allard's efforts to help clinical documentation professionals began long before her job with NEMT.

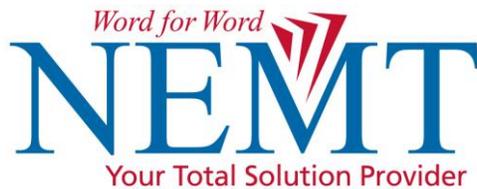
She has worked with the Community College Workforce Alliance in Virginia to bring a medical transcription curriculum to community colleges in the state. Through her efforts, students in Virginia can now take transcription classes through accredited schools at a fraction of the cost of private programs.

She also ensured that students who completed the community college program would be offered employment locally with CyMed.

She went on to teach transcription classes at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College from 2006-2008 and was an Advisory Board member at ECPI Technical College.

During her time at CyMed (2003-2007), she picked up a project to help train and employ transcriptionists in a Tennessee town where a factory had closed. Working with community and education leaders, she launched a program whereby laid-off factory workers (and others) could take transcription classes and then be assured employment with CyMed. Allard personally found a suitable employment center space for the new workers and directed its set-up and implementation.

Since coming to NEMT, she has dedicated a considerable amount of time to educating new graduates and helping them get jobs.



In 2011, she began working with Betsy Ertel of AHDI's Educator's Alliance Steering Committee to launch a new externship program for clinical documentation students. Through this program, NEMT has offered real-world experience to 49 students from six different schools. The bulk of all of the NEMT set-up and processing is done by Allard personally. She has devoted her own off-time to creating the program from the ground up, including writing all of the policies, procedures and protocols, working with each teacher and even working one-on-one with students when they have issues.

And in order to help other companies do the same, she documented each step of the process, speaking frankly about her own successes and challenges and giving up "trade secrets" to competitors to help more students enter similar programs through other MTSOs.

In 2013, she went one step further, brokering a deal with ChartNet Technologies that will allow extern students to train on voice recognition platforms, something that has not been feasible previously because of the financial constraints of voice recognition. This endeavor was featured in "For the Record Magazine" in August 2013.

She has also recently created a special cross-training program for MTs whose jobs are being lost to EHRs. Successful transcriptionists are given the opportunity to learn new transcription areas and specialties, using NEMT resources, so they can be placed on new accounts as their old ones disappear. In this way, she has come up with an innovative solution to help save jobs in a changing industry.

Allard has co-authored articles about the externship process for AHDI publications.

- "Matrix," September 2011;
- "Plexus," May 2012;
- "Plexus," May 2013;

As a CHPS specialist, she publishes a blog article each month providing HIPAA instruction and tips for healthcare information workers, dictators and other medical professionals. (blog.nemtinc.com)

She has also published articles on employment, recruiting, teambuilding and HIPAA for:

- "Career Step Magazine"
- "Advantage Magazine"
- NEMT's quarterly internal newsletter



In keeping with her work on the NEMT externship program, in 2012 she co-authored a white paper on the topic (available for download on AHDI's website) outlining best practices for MTSOs and schools interested in setting up similar programs.

She is also a frequently requested speaker and educator at seminars and webinars around the country on topics such as:

- "Professionalism in PJs"
- "Energizing on the E-Job"
- "Practical Tips for Creating Externships"
- "Turning Giant Projects into Bite-Sized Tasks"
- "The Ins and Outs of Applying for a Work-from-home Job"

In her letter of recommendation, Betsy Ertel, CEO of SpeedType, wrote: "It has been a joy and honor to work with Linda. She practices the highest level of professionalism with confidentiality and integrity. She is very focused when given a task at hand and offers her vital expertise with processes necessary for a strong outcome. Linda was a strong participant in the AHDI Externship program for students and MTSOs that initialized in 2010. She volunteered NEMT's support for the necessary functionality of the partnership. She made sure the process was well thought through, detailed oriented, and properly staffed for it to become a success. Linda's tireless efforts that benefit MTs are worthy to be recognized for Advocate of the Year."

This is the third year in a row that NEMT has won one of AHDI's top honors. In 2012, NEMT was named the AHDI Employer of the Year and in 2013, the company was named AHDI's Technology Innovator of the Year.

About NEMT

NEMT is one of the nation's top providers of medical transcription and clinical documentation services and guarantees its accuracy and turnaround times. The company is a corporate member of AHIMA and AHDI and is rated by KLAS. NEMT is an entirely US-based company with no offshoring. Contact Tara Courtland at 804-370-4597 or tcourtland@nemtinc.com for more information.



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