BACKGROUND AND REQUEST

Marion Technical College
Associate of Applied Science in Health Information Technology

Recommendation
This program clearly meets the Chancellor's standards for associate degree programs. There were no serious concerns raised in this review.

Request: Marion Technical College proposes an Associate of Applied Science in Health Information Technology in response to the growing need for health information technicians in central, northern, and western Ohio. For the past six years, Marion Technical College has offered a one-year technical certificate in medical billing and coding. Several of the region's larger healthcare providers expressed their current and future need for trained health information technicians to representatives of the college. To further validate this need, the college's Dean of Allied Health, in cooperation with the members of the Health Information Technology Advisory Committee, conducted a survey of the region's 180 healthcare providers. Thirteen of the fifteen hospitals in the region responded and indicated they were having difficulty recruiting trained health information technicians and supported the college's consideration for the development of this proposed program.

To address the critical shortage of healthcare workers, the Northwest Ohio Allied Health Consortium was formed and comprises Northwest State Community College, Rhodes State College, Urbana University and Marion Technical College. The goal of the consortium is to research, address, educate and respond to the need for health care professionals in communities in this region where existing health programs do not currently exist. The consortium recognized the deficit of health information technicians in the region and fully supported Marion Technical College in its development of this proposed program. In addition to using the expertise and resources of the consortium, the college also utilized the expertise of Cincinnati State Technical and Community College's Health Information Technology program director for guidance in determining faculty requirements, curriculum design and use of health information technology software. The success of this collaborative effort aligns and supports the goals of Ohio's *10 Year Strategic Plan for Higher Education,* which encourages community college program collaboration throughout a region. The success of this collaborative effort encourages the colleges to consider future program endeavors.

The American Health Information Management Association reports that Ohio has only eleven accredited Health Information Technician programs, two of which are located at private institutions. Ohio's need for trained health information technicians will continue to rise as healthcare facilities utilize new electronic systems and processes to record, track, and manage a patient's history.

The Ohio Job Outlook 2014: *Occupational Employment Projections* publication indicates that medical records/health information technician employment opportunities are expected to increase by 27 percent with the potential for 227 openings in Ohio, through 2014. The growth in job openings can be attributed to new positions being created, individuals retiring and employee advancement and promotions.

Graduates of the program will be able to find career opportunities in health care facilities, early intervention and long-term nursing homes, mental health care facilities, rehabilitative hospitals and clinics, adult-day care centers, health and wellness centers, and acute care programs, with a starting salary ranging from $30,000 to $34,000 a year.

Program Purpose/Mission: The purpose of the proposed program is to provide students with the opportunity to obtain a degree in a growing healthcare profession needed in central, western and northern Ohio. The college emphasizes "real-world" learning, applying practical theory and laboratory experiences directly to workplace settings. The college views education as a lifelong continuum and strives to be the community's first choice for learning. Serving several counties and as well as students who commute from surrounding counties, the college's mission is to, "provide an enriched and personal educational experience for its community." The college offers more than forty associate degree and certificate programs in business, engineering, health, information, medical sciences and public service technologies.

Enrollment: The college is projecting an enrollment of 25 full-time students and 9 part-time students beginning fall semester 2010. The college further projects that student enrollment will grow to 27 full-time students and 12 part-time students, beginning January 2011. Prospective students have already inquired about the program and have been placed in a database to be contacted once the proposed program is approved.

Curriculum: The curriculum is structured to provide students with the general education courses required for this proposed program and the specialized technical courses needed to meet the educational requirements for this proposed degree. Off-site clinical experiences are incorporated into the curriculum and offer students the opportunity to work with professionals in the field and learn from their knowledge and experience.

Articulation and Transfer Agreements are available for associate degree programs in Health Information Technician so students can transfer seamlessly into a bachelor's degree in Health Information Administrator program. Graduates of the proposed program will be eligible to sit for the Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT) Examination administered by the American Health Information Management Association. Separate state licensure is not available in Ohio as the RHIT exam is nationally recognized.

Faculty/Resource Needs: The Health Information Technology program will be located within the Allied Health Division of the college and the new program director hired will report to the Dean of Allied Health. The new program director will be responsible for meeting the educational and accreditation standards of the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM) and for the administration of the proposed program. A letter of intent will be submitted to CAHIIM upon notification of the Chancellor's approval of the proposed program.

Students enrolled in the program will share the facilities and equipment with the college's other allied health care programs. The college has available classroom space, computer labs and tutorial labs, and students enrolled will have access to campus library, student support services, financial aid, and other services to ensure their academic success. The college is financially prepared to offer this program.

The college is currently running a capital funding campaign to solicit donations for its new Health Technologies Building. Groundbreaking is planned for July 2009 and occupancy planned for January

2011. The new building will house the college's nursing program and several other allied health programs.

Program Duplication: The proposed program is not being offered at any other two-year institution within forty-five miles of the college. Columbus State Community College, almost fifty-miles south of Marion Technical College, offers a similar program.

Due to the number of healthcare providers in the counties surrounding Marion Technical College, the Northwest Ohio Allied Health Consortium is committed to working on additional program endeavors and workforce development issues. They have expressed their willingness to share their "best practices" and to explore opportunities for collaboration with other campuses in Ohio.

End of Comment Period: May 6, 2009
No Comments Received: Recommend Approval

Approved:

5-22-09

Eric D. Fingerhut, Chancellor **Date**

mlc