EPHIP: An Innovative Program for Health Informatics Education
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ABSTRACT

The Education Program for Health Informatics Professionals (EPHIP) is a diploma program in Applied Health Informatics. Here we emphasize the methods of program development and the innovative nature of this program.

THE NEED FOR THE PROGRAM

Large numbers of these IT/IM professionals are incompletely prepared for their roles in the health system: many lack either management or Computer Science education, and virtually none have a Health Informatics (HI) background. These professionals are employed adults. Unfortunately, there are few distance education alternatives available to them.

THE EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR HI PROFESSIONALS (EPHIP)

The Education Program for Health Informatics Professionals (EPHIP) is a distance education program focused on preparing candidates for and upgrading incumbents in IT/IM roles in the health field. EPHIP is based on the Applied Health Informatics (AHI) curriculum developed under the national Health Informatics Model Curriculum Development Initiative 1. Students receive a certificate on successful completion of each course, while students completing all required courses are awarded a Diploma in AHI.


BENEFITS TO STAKEHOLDERS

For Students: The credential students earn will provide a basis for rapid advancement over candidates lacking an HI background, will increase student confidence and enhance perception of leadership potential, and it will provide the competency base to make the student more effective in his/her job. For Employers: Employers will be able to upgrade staff and reduce their need for outside, often under-qualified human resources. An EPHIP diploma will be a strong indicator that a potential employee is qualified to address today's IT/IM challenges in the health field. For the Health Sector: Expert system procurers and managers will reduce the inherent risk in technology selection and deployment. The vendors of systems and services will benefit symmetrically, because more capable professionals will reduce wasted effort and time on the vendor's part and enable productive partnerships with clients.

THE STRUCTURE OF EPHIP COURSES

EPHIP is a synchronous, Internet accessed education program with 1 to 2-hour sessions (30 hours per course of 10 weeks duration), available at convenient times during the day. EPHIP courses are designed to provide high intensity, modularized, case-based, adult education-focused, learning experiences through distance delivery mechanisms. The program contains hundreds of "micro-courses" organized under umbrella "courses". Each module can be accessed "live", or replayed (streamed) by the student.

Students receive a certificate for the successful completion of examinations in each course (students may elect to do all or a selected set of courses). On successful completion of all required courses, the student will automatically receive an EPHIP Diploma, and have the opportunity to take the overall exam that evaluates overall comprehension of Applied Health Informatics. Those who achieve 70% or better on this exam and who complete a project will receive the designation "with distinction" on their diplomas.

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REFERENCE