

There were many personal factors that influenced my decision to pursue a degree in the field of health care, i.e. Health Information Technology.

My journey began when I obtained a CLC catalog. I looked through the catalog to get an idea of what the school had to offer. I knew I wanted to return to school. What I was not sure of was what field of study was best for me and my current station in life. I was a married mom of three small children, all under the age of five years old. I also had a part-time job. Not only would I have to consider my responsibilities as a wife, mom, and employee; I would now have to consider what would be required of me as a student. I wanted a job that was fun and challenging. I wanted a position of some importance. The small secretarial positions I was working did not challenge my mind. I also wanted to make something more than minimum wage. I knew that I needed more education and a degree of some kind to get to that point in my life.

When browsing through the catalog, I noticed there was a difference between an Associates Degree Transfer Program and an Associate in Applied Science Degree. The transfer program applied to those students who planned on continuing their education at a 4-year institution. The Applied Science Degree applied to those individuals who wanted to obtain a more hands-on education in a finite area of study and then move on to a position in that field of study. I also noticed that the school offered career certificates. I could take two semesters (a total of 32 weeks) and have certificate in a particular field of study. I had a lot to think about. I wrote out a list of criteria to consider.

- How long will it take for me to obtain just a certificate?
- Is there flexibility in the times and places that courses are offered? I had family to consider.
- Is there room for growth in the field I plan to study?
- Is there really a market for this field and are these positions in demand?
- What kind of salary can I expect when I complete my schooling?
- Is there a career of study that I can be passionate about and not be bored with after a few years?

These were things I needed to discuss with my family. I also had to decide what was most important in the process of making this decision. What could I give a little on and sacrifice for the purpose of bettering my education and position.

After long consideration, I settled on asking more about the Health Information Technology program. I was always interested in health care, but not the clinical end of it. I knew I could not tolerate blood or needles. I had to work with the talents I already had. I was good at organization of paperwork and paying attention to details. I was good at typing and understanding software programs. I had some exposure to the health care industry already and found it fascinating. Some of the career certificates in the program would allow me to work from home, once I had some more experience under my belt. I would have the opportunity to still be available to my family. Health care in America is not an industry that suffers from the major highs and lows or layoffs that the corporate industry faces everyday. These positions would be more on the administrative end and not the clinical end of health care. I decided that I needed more information.

I attended an information session that is required for all students who are interested in applying for one of the health care programs. It is there I would have the opportunity to ask all the questions I had running through my mind. It was at that session that I made my final decision to jump into this program with both feet. What was the catalyst you ask? It was the instructor/director that helped me make my decision. There was an energy and excitement about the instructor that made me want to begin. If the instructor/director could bring that sort of excitement and positive energy to the information session, what would she bring to the classroom? I wanted someone who was passionate about what they taught. I could never be bored in class if there was always this positive flow of energy. I enrolled in my first class, Medical Terminology, in the summer of 2002. The instructor was not the individual who led the information session, but I was not disappointed after the first class. My instructor had more energy than my five year old. She was fun, energetic

and very knowledgeable. She worked in the field, so she had stories to tell us to help us associate the real world with the material we were covering in class. It was that instructor that helped me to decide that I not only wanted to obtain the certificates available within the program; I wanted to go for the full two-year Associate in Applied Science degree. I found that the instructors in this program were all passionate about what they do. They were always available to talk to should you be having a problem with the material. It is because of this program that I am now nationally accredited and able to take my training and skills not only anywhere within the United States, but across borders as well. I am qualified to work anywhere in the world with the education I obtained here at CLC. It is also the reason why I am able to continue my education and start on my Bachelor's Degree in Health Information Management.

So why choose a field within the health care industry? Because, it can open more doors than you could have ever dreamed was possible.

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