

Medicine's language—CPT—opens for developers to test innovations

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What's the news: The AMA has launched a program to help the creators of health IT products leverage AMA-published content from the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT[®]) code set—often referred to as “the language of medicine.” It's part of an ongoing effort to make health IT an asset to physicians, not a burden.

The CPT Developer Program facilitates access to the AMA's expertise, content and resources in medical terminology and coding to those with pioneering ideas at the crucial early stages of product development.

The program is designed to help developers get their innovations in front of the physicians who can use them to help patients. Program participants will have access to a monthly newsletter, quarterly journal and educational webinars on how the CPT code set gets used and why it's important to innovation.

Here are some other elements of the program.

CPT development licenses. These yearlong licenses allow the developer community royalty-free access to CPT content to build and test innovations in their development stage prior to production.

AMA Intelligent Platform. This central interface allows users to license, access and manage the latest CPT content with modern delivery options including application programming interfaces, web apps and data files.

Developer engagement. Educational and informational opportunities designed to foster collaboration and co-creation with application developers will be offered, including the AMA's first developer symposium in November.

Why it's important: Digital health startups raised \$29.1 billion in investment capital in 2021—more than double their 2020 haul, according to the Rock Health digital health venture fund.

“The CPT Developer Program is more important than ever as innovations in digital health technology and services are expected to seamlessly integrate medical terminology before they emerge onto the market,” said Laurie McGraw, the AMA’s senior vice president of health solutions.

Among the developers already taking part in the program are those exploring how to use natural-language processing, machine learning and other techniques, according to Tom Giannulli, MD, chief medical information officer at the AMA Integrated Health Model Initiative. He said practicing physicians could see the benefits in the form of health IT products that enable them to more efficiently complete documentation tasks through smarter autocomplete-type functionalities.

Learn more: From revitalizing medical practices to ensuring that evidence-based digital health technology helps provide high-quality patient care, the AMA is shaping and supporting digital health innovation and breaking down policy barriers to the adoption of digital health technology.

Stay updated on the latest developments in this area by watching AMA webinars that put CPT in conversation with digitally enable care.

The AMA also offers a vaccine code finder resource to help identify the appropriate CPT code combination for the type and dose of COVID-19 vaccine provided to each patient.

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