

# Committee Outlines History, Future of AHIMA's Code of Ethics

AHIMA established the Code of Ethics in 1957 with the idea that the Code would provide its membership and others with a set of values and principles to guide conduct. The Code is intended to be not only enforceable but inspirational as well. It depicts the behaviors that are valued and worthy of emulation by all HIM professionals.

The AHIMA Code of Ethics was revised and approved by the House of Delegates in July 2004 and serves as a guide for the professional ethics of the association's members and credentialed nonmembers. The six sections are:

- **preamble**—provides the ethical obligation of the HIM members and credentialed nonmembers
- **values**—summarizes the core values based on AHIMA's
- **purpose**—delineates the six purposes for the Code of Ethics
- **use of the code**—describes how the Code should be used by members and credentialed nonmembers
- **ethical principles**—Eleven principles
- **how to interpret the code of ethics**—the guidelines for the eleven principles to help members and nonmembers interpret the principles

The Code helps members in decision-making processes and actions, outlines expectations for making ethical decisions in the workplace, and shows the world that AHIMA members stand for integrity.

## Why Have the Code?

"The goal of the Professional Ethics Committee is to help all members of AHIMA act in a manner that represents the



profession in an honorable way that speaks of trust, honesty, and integrity," says Donna L. Bowers, JD, RHIA, CHP, committee chair.

Enforcement of the Code is vital as well. By dealing with issues and finding resolutions, it shows the membership that AHIMA will do everything it can to maintain high standards of professionalism for its membership. The resolution of any issues can be managed through counseling, mentoring, coaching, and when the situation warrants, even removal of a person's credentials.

AHIMA, its membership, and the Professional Ethics Committee hold true to its mission to instill and honor the core professional values established for all of us. For more information about ethics and a list of the 2007 committee members, visit <http://www.ahima.org/about/ethics.asp>. ●