HIM'S IMPACT ON MANAGING HEALTH DATA TO DRIVE CLINICAL AND BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

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As we celebrate HIP week, it's important to acknowledge the many facets of HIM's contribution to healthcare. Its role in driving the success of clinical and business performance for healthcare organizations using coded data, and data collected within the electronic health record (EHR) and other systems. Whether it is clinical improvement or business development, data integrity is the cornerstone of organizational success.

CLINICAL

The EHR is a fundamental tool employed in providing quality healthcare. EHR data collected, maintained, and analyzed then provides valuable information used for treatment plan development, health maintenance, clinical decision support, research, population health, and more, all resulting in improved patient care and health outcomes. Clinical documentation tools are developed and standardized across organizational users to ensure consistent documentation and data collection of key data fields used in trending patient care, reporting, and establishing quality of care standards.

Incorrect information within the EHR is amended, which has an impact on downstream documentation and exchange or release of information. Information is easily linked to other documentation, thus allowing for quick and widespread sharing of potentially incorrect information, both internally and exchanged electronically through an HIE or general release of information. Maintaining an accurate and complete MPI eliminates the potential for patient harm or unnecessary testing by eliminating duplicate medical records for individual patients and may also reduce costs of services.

With the upgrade to ICD-10-CM and ICD-10-PCS, more detailed coded data provides deeper insight into symptoms and conditions, quality of care, clinical and pharmaceutical research, and health management and monitoring. Coded data is used in maintaining disease registries, again, assisting patient treatment plans and health outcomes. Lastly, coded data assists in disease surveillance through reporting for population health purposes at the state and national level. The power of coded data has a significant impact far beyond the healthcare organization.

Ensuring timely completion of documentation not only provides quality information for continuity of care, but also places the healthcare organization in compliance with CMS requirements and accreditation standards for

record completion. This function serves not only a clinical need, but also the business performance of the healthcare organization.

BUSINESS

Sustainability as a healthcare organization is predicated upon business strategies which create a patient-centric experience, decrease cost of care, ensure timely and sufficient revenue, and solidify market position. Inherent to an organization's business performance stamina is the strength of its data and the way it is optimized to achieve strategic goals. As such, it creates an entity highly dependent on the quality and effective use of its data. Sources of data from clinical, administrative, and financial streams feed data that is necessary for organizational performance analysis; HIM professionals exert influence over those sources. As examples, their expertise in data stewardship and governance, clinical documentation integrity, and application of diagnosis and procedure codes feed a plethora of business purposes including, but not limited to:

- Revenue cycle management—the lifeblood of the organization

- Population health management— key to managing the clinical and financial risks of defined groups

- Quality measures—determines accreditation and market position

- Service line management—provides market insight such as mergers, acquisitions, and product development

HIM'S ROLE

The HIM professional contributes to these activities by ensuring the accurate, completeness, and timeliness of clinical documentation by overall management of the EHR, as well as oversight of all associated activities. They are well-versed in state/federal regulations and accreditation standards that govern health information, and they have unique competencies and skills that are essential in the accuracy, accessibility, delivery, and integrity of health data. Components essential to attain and validate data that drive organizational performance are tied directly to the subject matter expertise and operational finesse of HIM professionals. Demonstration of those skills is apparent in areas such as:

- CDI

- Coding and revenue cycle

- Data governance/content management

- Document Imaging/Scanning

- EHR record quality, integrity and documentation timeliness

- Health information exchange

- MPI management

- Patient rights advocate (accounting of disclosures, restrictions, amendments, and more)

- Prepare and authenticate data for physician credentialing

- Privacy and security of health information

- Registry data management

- Release of information

- Statistical reporting/analytics

- Transcription/speech recognition

GROWING HIM SKILLSETS IN DATA INTEGRITY AND MANAGEMENT

With the dramatically changing landscape of healthcare, HIM educational programs have responded by expanding associate and baccalaureate degree curriculums to ensure HIM professionals remain at the forefront of data governance, compliance, data analytics, revenue cycle management, and integrity of health data in the future.

In addition, there is growth of new graduate level programs in health information management, analytics, and informatics, in both on-site and distance learning opportunities — making it more convenient for full-time workers to also continue their education.

Employers look to AHIMA credentials (for example, the RHIA, RHIT, CHPS, CCS, CDIP, and others) as an indicator of expertise in the respective area of focus that can elevate the applicant over others during the application review process.

HONING HIM'S DATA-DRIVEN CAREER MARKETABILITY

Much like the use of brand awareness, a consumer's ability to recognize a brand based on things such as logo or colors and the associated feelings, HIM professionals should use their education, credentials, and skillsets to showcase their expertise in data integrity and management. Application of a brand awareness mentality can help leverage both employment marketability and career longevity.