

HIP Week 2012

Article and Quiz for the Consumer

The Responsibility of Managing Health Information

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The central focus for today's healthcare is on the consumer and how they use and manage their health information. Consumers are given many choices and options when it comes to their protected health information (PHI) and it is important for them to understand their rights under law. Every consumer has the right to:

- View and access their information
- Request and receive copies of their information
- Request confidential communications of PHI
- Request a correction or update to their health information
- Request a restriction to their health information (keep certain information from ever being released)
- Request an accounting of disclosures (log of where certain information was released as defined by law)

Consumers also need to know about the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), which is encouraging the use of electronic health records (EHRs). This law has led to an increase in the number of health information exchange (HIE) organizations operating in the United States. HIE technology supports and manages the electronic sharing of health information between healthcare providers and organizations with the goal of improving quality and efficiency in healthcare.

When healthcare providers share information, consumers see advantages. The advantages include: improved quality of care, increased efficiencies in the services provided, information available at the time of healthcare, and allowing consumers to make educated decisions about their care. As more information is shared, consumers can play an active role in understanding their disease and treatment process.

HIE technology will help providers and organizations share information, and health information management (HIM) professionals will always strive to protect the privacy and security of all health information.

In an effort to address these risks, many organizations are creating Data Governance Programs. These programs help organizations define the reason for collecting health information, including the ways that the information is used. The basic goal of the program is to ensure accountability and responsibility for collecting and using health information.

Within the Data Governance Program is the role of "Data Steward." The term "data stewardship" is defined as "the responsibilities and accountabilities associated with managing, collecting, viewing, storing, sharing, disclosing, or otherwise making use of personal health information." The HIM professional's unique skill set makes them a natural fit for the data steward role and in managing healthcare data.

HIM professionals understand how the data is used by healthcare providers and consumers. They work with many members of the healthcare team to make sure the health record contains the most accurate data possible and that the information is used correctly. To assist HIM professionals in defining their responsibilities when managing data, AHIMA developed a model of the 10 characteristics of data quality:

Accessibility	The data is easily obtained
Accuracy	The data is correct
Consistency	The data is reliable
Comprehensiveness	The required data is included
Currency	The data is up-to-date
Definition	The data and information in the health record are clearly defined
Granularity	The data is captured at the correct level of detail
Relevancy	The data is useful
Precision	The data has expected values (example 1965 instead of 65)
Timeliness	The data is recorded near or at the time of the visit

¹AHIMA. Pocket Glossary of Health Information Management and Technology, *Third Edition*. Chicago, IL: AHIMA, 2012.

Quiz

1. As a healthcare consumer, I have the right to view and access my health information.
a. True
b. False
2. Which statement is true about health information exchange organizations (HIEs)?
a. HIEs are organizations who support and manage the electronic exchange of health information.
b. HIEs are only inside the four walls of a hospital.
c. HIEs only share information on a weekly basis.
d. All the above.
3. One of the advantages consumers see when healthcare providers share information is improved quality of care.
a. True
b. False
4. The role of data steward is not a good fit for the HIM professional.
a. True
b. False
5. How many AHIMA data quality characteristics are there?
a. 15
b. 5
c. 10
d. 7

Answers: 1. True, 2. A, 3. True, 4. False, 5. C