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HIM Leaders Steer Workforce Through Times of Transformation

Journal of AHIMA discusses tips for leading HIM professionals to success in face of change

CHICAGO – January 23, 2019 – As advances in technology continue to transform the healthcare industry, health information management (HIM) professionals are poised to not only help guide their organizations through the transition, but help them thrive.

In the article “[Weathering the Storm: How to Lead through the Chaos of Change](#)” in the January issue of the *Journal of AHIMA*, the monthly journal of the [American Health Information Management Association](#) (AHIMA), experts in the HIM field discuss how to lead through continuing industry changes brought on by technological advances such as electronic health records (EHRs) and the transformation that comes with digitizing nearly every piece of information about a patient.

The experts point to how EHR implementation brought additional changes such as the need for health information exchange, patient portals, querying of databases, and an increase in regulations such as HITECH, MACRA and the 21st Century Cures Act. Additional factors such as an increased focus on artificial intelligence in healthcare and the move to ICD-10-CM/PCS has also impacted the HIM profession.

This transformation is revolutionizing the HIM profession and shaping the way leaders must train, motivate and encourage their workforce, according to the article.

“Technology will continue to disrupt the healthcare industry and the HIM profession,” said AHIMA CEO Wylecia Wiggs Harris, PhD, CAE. “While that change can be scary, it’s also an exciting opportunity for HIM professionals to lean into it and lead their organizations—and the broader healthcare community—through this transformation to help create a stronger healthcare system. I encourage HIM professionals to learn from their colleagues’ experiences leading organizations successfully through transition periods, to embrace emerging disciplines and continuing education opportunities and to seize the opportunity to help transform healthcare.”

As healthcare organizations adapt to meet necessary changes brought on by new technologies, there are opportunities for HIM professionals in clinical areas and disciplines such as clinical documentation improvement, analytics and data and risk management, according to experts cited in the article and outlined in AHIMA’s [HIM Reimagined initiative](#).

To help mitigate anxiety about these changes within HIM departments, managers should make the transition planning process as transparent as possible and involve the entire department. This includes walking their team through a SWOT analysis—assessing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of any new tools and procedures—to help them manage the transition.

Workforce worries can be an accompanying result of a transition, which include concerns about career prospects, potential layoffs or the need for more education. These worries require leadership to approach their plans with empathy and transparent communication, for example:

- First address why a change is being made in order to answer questions proactively.
- Provide as many details as possible, especially when dealing with layoffs or restructuring of services. It is also important to provide as much advance notice as possible.
- Ask employees what can be done to offset the effects of the change.
- Consider reimbursement programs when continued education of employees is required.

Also in this issue

Drivers for Solid Information Management Expanding in Healthcare

The healthcare industry relies on data and information from trustworthy, accurate and protected resources. The ability to successfully leverage these requires the use of information management drivers to meet the new demands of an evolving landscape. Some of the major practices include:

1. Triple Aim
2. Data, Analytics, and Artificial Intelligence (AI)
3. Digital Health and Disruption
4. Internet of Things (IoT)
5. Automation and AI
6. Regulatory Compliance
7. Cybersecurity Threats
8. Disruption, New Models, and New Entrants

In the article “[Drivers for Solid Information Management Expanding in Healthcare.](#)” Deborah Green, MBA, explains these drivers of information management and how they have evolved over the past five years to give organizations a competitive advantage and help overcome industry challenges.

Read these articles and more in the January issue of the *Journal of AHIMA* or online at journal.ahima.org.

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About AHIMA

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) represents more than 103,000 health information professionals in the United States and around the world. AHIMA is committed to promoting and advocating for high quality research, best practices and effective standards in health information and to actively contributing to the development and advancement of health information professionals worldwide. www.ahima.org