



news

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AHIMA PUSHES FOR HIM WORKFORCE TO BE INCLUDED IN JOBS BILL

Touts public private partnership with HHS as successful model

SALT LAKE CITY—The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) will today announce its “HIM Jobs for America” Initiative at the association’s 83rd annual convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, in what the eighty-year-old, 63,000-member professional society says will be a sustained effort to support American employment as well as help improve the healthcare of underserved Americans in communities across the country in which research shows healthcare disparities exist based on race, income and geographic variables.

AHIMA’s workforce initiative will be buttressed by news of an existing partnership, announced simultaneously, between the Department of Health and Human Services, AHIMA and North Shore Medical Labs, Inc. In this program, AHIMA will provide free health IT training to providers and staff in underserved communities, and North Shore will donate electronic health record (EHR) software and services through Nortec Software, Inc. The demonstration program will assist physicians in small practices in Alabama, Mississippi and North Carolina.

“AHIMA is proud to provide leadership in this important initiative that supports the employment and re-employment of tens of thousands of health information management professionals, who are, in many cases, already educated and properly credentialed. The entry and return to the workforce of HIM professionals means we’ve created sustainable, full-time, career-track jobs that, once filled, will make a significant contribution to American society, even beyond helping to shrink our unemployment rolls,” said Bonnie Cassidy, MPA, RHIA, president AHIMA.

AHIMA’s “HIM Jobs for America” Workforce Initiative includes a legislative platform that addresses what we believe forms the cornerstone of effective job creation in the health information management profession:

- Tax credit that incentivizes employers to provide work training which prepares credentialed HIM practitioners with the core job skills demanded by an integrated electronic health information system. Today, AHIMA has several workforce development programs that

would allow employers to immediately implement the bridge training upon which the tax credits would be rewarded.

- Tax credit that incentivizes employers to provide retraining and/or additional training to current HIM workers that prepares them to contribute to the development and operation of an electronic health information environment.
- Health Information Technology Professional (HIT Pro™), AHIMA's competency exams for tomorrow's health IT professionals, confirms that workers' experiences and skills will satisfy the nation's need for health information technology. Employer would receive equal credit for all of its HIM professionals who pass the exam in lieu of formal training. As the healthcare industry transitions to electronic health records (EHRs), workers taking the HIT Pro exams tend to demonstrate a commitment to both their profession and their career. They are eager to display competency in this evolving field and are excited to work on the leading edge of health IT.
- Expand and fund baccalaureate and graduate-level curricula to further educate the next generation of HIM professionals by offering incentives to accredited state and land-grant colleges and universities as well as scholarships for students who pursue an HIM degree at or beyond a baccalaureate degree.

According to Bill Rudman, Vice President, Educational Visioning at AHIMA and Executive Director of the AHIMA Foundation, "AHIMA wants to build a partnership with business, academia and the federal government to create the estimated 40,000 jobs required to properly build and maintain a national electronic health records initiative. We're engaged in several Health Information workforce development programs that, like the Alliance to Reduce Health IT Disparities with HHS and North Shore, meet the standards set forth in the President's American Jobs Act." These standards include:

- Provide a demonstrable public benefit by helping advance a more effective and cost-efficient healthcare delivery system
- Create permanent, sustainable, middle-class jobs that pay well and offer employment security and cannot be outsourced

About AHIMA

Representing more than 63,000 specially educated Health Information Management professionals in the United States and around the world, the American Health Information Management Association 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. AHIMA's enduring goal is quality healthcare through quality information. www.ahima.org.

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