



news

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AHIMA supports the AMA's call for Inclusivity in EHRs for the Transgender Patient Population

AMA's new policy reflects AHIMA's position on the importance of identifying and documenting transgender patients

By Julie Dooling, MSHI, RHIA, CHDA, FAHIMA

The American Medical Association (AMA) recently amended its policy to support the voluntary inclusion of a transgender patient's preferred name and clinically relevant sex-specific anatomy in medical documentation.

The amendment reflects AHIMA's long-standing position regarding the importance of inclusivity to deliver quality care and best outcomes for patients.

AHIMA fully supports AMA's call for inclusivity in EHRs for the transgender patient population. AHIMA's LGBTQ workgroup has been actively addressing operational and workflow issues pertaining to health information management (HIM) professionals for several years through articles, practice briefs, and presentations.

Further, the amended AMA policy aligns with the recommendations of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health that medical documentation should include a patient's preferred name, gender identity, and pronoun preference, along with a means to maintain an inventory of a patient's medical transition history and current anatomy.

HIM professionals struggle with overall data integrity, from collection to access, and management of sexual orientation and gender identity (SO/GI) data. As the AMA has stated, many health information systems today do not allow for standardized SO/GI data collection.

Electronic health record (EHR) vendors need to update their modules to capture sexual orientation and gender identity in addition to pronouns, preferred name, and sex assigned at birth, to drive coding and billing functions. In addition, we agree that a sex-specific anatomy or biological inventory must be documented in order to provide our patients with the best possible care.

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