



**news**

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## HIM Professionals Versus the Opioid Crisis

*Journal of AHIMA addresses how proper data collection, dissemination and analysis can help combat opioid misuse*

**CHICAGO – November 9, 2018** – As continued efforts and legislation seek to prevent opioid addiction health information management (HIM) professionals can help by supporting initiatives to reduce the number of opioid prescriptions and improve provider education.

In the article "[Producing Better Data to Help Combat Opioid Dependence](#)" in the November issue of the *Journal of AHIMA*, the monthly journal of the [American Health Information Management Association](#) (AHIMA), the authors outline how data on opioids is collected and the importance of using HIM best practices in opioid abuse prevention.

"While data alone cannot solve the opioid crisis or other public health issues, the analysis and translation of data can certainly provide a solid start," said AHIMA CEO Wylecia Wiggs Harris, PhD, CAE. "HIM professionals have the expertise to track trends and decipher the data necessary for healthcare providers to help reduce opioid abuse."

Careful analysis of data can help identify inconsistencies in prescription patterns and predict future opioid abuse. The article authors note how the electronic health record is key to combatting opioid abuse, as long as data moves seamlessly and consistently from provider to provider.

The article also examines the role of prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMP), which are state-run electronic data repositories of dispensed prescription data. There is no nationwide PDMP, however, and access to dispensed-opioid data within PDMPs varies from state to state. This is one reason why national dispensed-opioid data is not available to healthcare organizations. Since the current system with its varying regulations makes it increasingly difficult to use data on the opioid crisis in a meaningful way, the authors recommend a standard process of accessing and disseminating PDMP data across states.

These recommendations and processes align with a five-point opioid strategy launched in 2017 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

- Better addiction prevention, treatment and recovery services
- Better data on the epidemic
- Better pain management
- Better targeting of overdose-reversing drugs
- Better research on pain and addiction

### **Also in this issue**

#### **Ensuring Data Integrity During Health Information Exchange**

As health information exchanges (HIE) continue to gain provider members and providers start exchanging more health information, HIM professionals should use their expertise to help implement best practices in data exchange.

In the article “[Ensuring Data Integrity During Health Information Exchange](#),” Mary Butler, associate editor at the *Journal of AHIMA*, examines challenges and successes HIEs face as they gain popularity in the industry and how these organizations can ensure data integrity. In addition, Butler highlights the benefits of HIE organizations, how to measure success and how to protect data through integrity challenges such as the lack of standard for patient identity.

Read these articles and more in the November issue of the *Journal of AHIMA* or online at [journal.ahima.org](http://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 best practices and effective standards in health information and to actively contribute to the development and advancement of health information professionals worldwide. [www.ahima.org](http://www.ahima.org)