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HIM Plays a Vital Role in Healthcare Ratings

Journal of AHIMA shows how integrity of coded data can affect perceptions of health organizations

CHICAGO – October 17, 2018 – To ensure healthcare ratings accurately reflect the quality of care given, health information management (HIM) professionals should lead their organizations in developing a comprehensive audit plan that evaluates the coded data – the health information in a patient’s medical record – that is the foundation of healthcare ratings.

In the article “[HIM’s Vital Role in Healthcare Ratings](#)” in the October issue of the *Journal of AHIMA*, the monthly journal of the [American Health Information Management Association](#) (AHIMA), the author outlines strategies organizations must take to protect the integrity of their data, including an audit plan. This analytical process involves stakeholders from all areas of patient care and should provide an objective assessment of institutional data quality. The findings can be used to correct deficiencies, identify opportunities for improvement and proactively monitor data quality over time, which ultimately should improve an organization’s rating.

“Healthcare ratings can be an important tool in helping consumers make informed decisions on where to seek care,” said AHIMA CEO Wylecia Wiggs Harris, PhD, CAE. “HIM professionals play a critical role in determining the integrity of the information on which these ratings are based, bringing the voice and meaning of data to the ratings conversation.”

In addition to the consumer perspective, accurate clinical outcomes data is important to the process of contract negotiations between hospitals and payers. The accuracy of this data helps organizations quantify their commitment to value-based and high-quality care.

Sample components of an audit plan include:

- C-suite awareness of the advantages of HIM’s role in elevating or maintaining their organization’s rankings.
- A designated HIM professional within the organization to serve as the subject matter expert on the specific coding-related elements that factor into healthcare rankings.

- A dedicated health data analyst to abstract and report on quality-related internal and external data.
- Follow-up audits to proactively identify documentation gaps and coding errors that could lead to negative rankings if not corrected.
- Transparent communication with all team members on the link between ratings and their organization's fiscal health and longevity, both of which are essential to job security.

The article also includes a summary of selected healthcare ratings systems such as Hospital Compare and Healthgrades. In addition, the author provides specific examples of how coding can negatively impact healthcare ratings.

Also in this issue

Deliverance in the Data

Electronic health records and health information technology (HIT) have evolved to meet the needs of providers who deliver care in complex patient situations. Even with these advances, significant barriers within the healthcare system remain between providers and patients.

In the article "[Deliverance in the Data](#)" Mary Butler, associate editor at the *Journal of AHIMA*, examines the story of Megan O'Boyle – the mother of a child with a rare genetic syndrome called Phelan-McDermid Syndrome – for whom gathering and maintaining past medical records presented numerous physical and financial hurdles. O'Boyle now heads an endeavor that advocates for current patients as well as future generations of newly diagnosed patients by collecting and using their health information to improve care and contribute to Phelan-McDermid Syndrome research.

Read these articles and more in the October 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 best practices and effective standards in health information and to actively contributing to the development and advancement of health information professionals worldwide. AHIMA is advancing informatics, data analytics, and information governance to achieve the goal of providing expertise to ensure trusted information for healthcare. www.ahima.org