



news

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Preparing for Audits Improves Compliance, Reduces HIM Frustration

The best defense is a good offense when it comes to audits, experts say

CHICAGO – March 13, 2018 – The healthcare industry has been faced with an increase in audits over the past decade, leaving providers and health information management (HIM) professionals apprehensively awaiting the day they receive an audit request themselves.

In the article “[Attack of the Audits](#),” experts from the [American Health Information Management Association](#) (AHIMA) discuss in the March 2018 issue of the *Journal of AHIMA* how HIM professionals can best prepare for audit requests.

“Awareness and education are keys to alleviating audit pressure,” said Wylecia Wiggs Harris, PhD, CEO of AHIMA. “Every member of the HIM team should understand how audits work and why they are important. It’s another step toward ensuring the integrity of data.”

The rise of cybersecurity attacks and healthcare fraud and abuse are just some of the factors in the rise of audits.

HIM experts agree that it’s important that coding departments pay close attention to the auditing process and put proactive protocols in place to safeguard against unfavorable results.

Experts suggest HIM departments adopt the following practices:

- **Create a centralized audit management system** – Appointing a compliance team will ensure audit requests are completed by deadline and appropriately returned to the auditor. Clear and concise communication between compliance team members and coding departments will keep the workflow running smoothly.
- **Continuing Education** – Staying on top of new guidelines and changes will properly prepare coders for audit requests and mitigate challenges. Equip HIM teams on payer vernacular and comprehensive understanding of the Recovery Audit Contractor (RAC) program.
- **Perform internal audits**– To ensure compliance, regular internal audits should be performed to reveal and fix any coding errors or documentation problems. Performing regular internal audits will also reduce the amount of time it takes to complete external audit requests.

Also in this issue:

Apple Inc.'s announcement of its first-ever facial recognition technology in the new iPhone X stunned consumers. But cell phones aren't the only sphere where we see biometrics coming into play; facial images are increasingly included in EHRs as a means for better identifying patients and safeguarding against identity theft.

The article, "[Smile, You're on Facial Recognition](#)," discusses the ways in which facial recognition technology can be used by HIM professionals as a patient identifier, as well as the challenges it presents.

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 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