

Case Study IX. AHIMA Membership Responsibilities

A new hospital opens in your local community and recruits for a HIM director, requiring that the person have an RHIA. A HIM professional in the community applies for the director's position in the HIM Department and is hired. Shortly after starting her job, she is the hostess to the Regional health information management Association meeting that is held monthly in the various hospitals in the community. At the meeting, the new director is introduced as a RHIA. Several of the local members know that she has the RHIT credential, not the RHIA credential. Is there an ethical violation, dilemma, or concern?

In this scenario, there is an ethical concern. There may be an ethical concern if the new HIM director purposely misrepresented her credential. However, this needs to be verified. It is also quite possible that the mistake has occurred on the part of the individual introducing the director. Perhaps there is an assumption that because she is a director, she is an RHIA.

1. *What was the intent of the AHIMA member's actions that resulted in an ethics violation being brought forward?*

Determine if it was intentional or unintentional (could the presenter have made a mistake?)

2. *What is the potential harm to the organization or AHIMA as a result of the act?*

If intentional fraud, the action is harmful to both the employer and AHIMA professional (reputational).

3. *What is the status of the AHIMA member's training, education, and awareness of the AHIMA Code of Ethics?*

If intentional fraud, note that the member is "established" (assumed by leadership role) and should have clearly known the consequences of the action.

4. *What AHIMA Ethical Codes have been violated?*

The principles and guidelines that this member possibly violated include:

Principle II. Put service and the health and welfare of persons before self-interest and conduct themselves in the practice of the profession so as to bring honor to themselves, their peers, and to the health information management profession.

Principle IV. Refuse to participate in or conceal unethical practices or procedures.

Principle VII. Represent the profession accurately to the public.

Principle IX. State truthfully and accurately their credentials, professional education, and experiences.