

## Supporting HIT Standardization and Systems Interoperability

Since the early 2000s, the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) has been leading national and international health information technology (HIT) standardization efforts. In these efforts we focus on HIT standards to support interoperability (trusted electronic information sharing across HIT products including electronic health record (EHR), ancillary systems and mobile health applications). AHIMA standardization efforts support the following three components of interoperability:

1. **Functional Interoperability**— shared rules for information capture, management and use in healthcare
2. **Semantic Interoperability**— shared trusted content and
3. **Technical Interoperability**—shared interoperable, secure and reliable HIT infrastructure.

In addition, AHIMA is **building a global workforce** to develop, operate and use interoperable HIT products. Our approach is based on the public-private partnership of affected stakeholders. Specific activities related to HIT standards, information systems interoperability and global eHealth workforce are described below.

### **Functional Interoperability Standards: Supporting Information Management Practices in Healthcare**

AHIMA is leading the development of standards for information management practices in healthcare. A set of AHIMA functional standards includes:

- ✓ **Business requirements for HIM practices**
- ✓ **HIM practice checklists and**
- ✓ **HIM practice use cases**

The **AHIMA Standards Task Force** has been working on the following HIM practices standards:

- **Specification of Business Requirements for Information Management in Healthcare** to standardize business processes for the AHIMA's Information Governance competencies in healthcare
- **AHIMA's Patient Registration Use Case** to standardize the workflow and content for data capture when initiating clinical encounter
- **AHIMA's Copy & Paste Use Case** to standardize the use of copy/paste capabilities in HIT products across healthcare organizations.

The **AHIMA Standards Task Force** collaborates with the **Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise (IHE)** — a collaborative of HIT vendors and professional medical associations — to inform the development of the interoperability standards to support HIM practices. Our joint products include two **White Papers**:

- **HIT Standards for HIM Practices** (<http://qrs.ly/lb4vec0>) on the methodology and roadmap for developing HIM practice standards and their alignment with HIT standards, and
- **Patient Registration Demographics for Data Capture and Exchange** on the use of HL7 2.5.1 message standard for patient demographic data.

### **Semantic Interoperability Standards: Supporting Clinical Documentation Improvement (CDI) Programs**

CDI programs focus on standardized representation of clinical pathways (clinical workflow) and case definition templates (data requirements) for information capture, sharing and use in healthcare, public health and research.

To support CDI programs, AHIMA Standards activities involve various national and international initiatives:

- **AHIMA Content Standardization Project** assesses online tools for building, storing, and reusing standards-based case definition templates and document templates for CDI programs including templates specified in the AHIMA Use Cases.
- **International Organization for Standardization, Technical Committee 215 Health Informatics (ISO/TC215)** — a global standards development organization (SDO) — where AHIMA leads in the development of international semantic content standards for terminological resources, data mapping quality, metadata repository requirements, and other. Since 2011, AHIMA provides Secretariat to ISO/TC215 and US delegation at ISO/TC215—US Technical Advisory Group (USTAG).
- **Trillium Project: European Union (EU) – US Collaboration on the International Patient Summary** — AHIMA collaborates with international community to guide the development of standardized content for patient information (medication, laboratory, imaging, etc.) and information governance standards supporting secure cross-border trusted information sharing.

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### Technical Interoperability Standards: *Supporting Interoperable HIT Infrastructure*

To assure that technical infrastructure supports HIM practice needs, AHIMA is active in various national and international initiatives:

- **EHR standards development at Health Level Seven (HL7)** for interoperable health information exchange infrastructure
- **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** — AHIMA staff serves as liaison from ISO/TC215 to the leading SDO for information and communication technology
- **Joint Initiative Council (JIC) of SDOs** (HL7, IHE, ISO/TC215, SNOMED, LOINC and others) — AHIMA staff participates in the council to guide coordination of SDO activities in developing standards for information capture, exchange, use and re-use.

### Driving Interoperability Standards Adoption: *Developing Standards for HIT Users*

At the **ISO/TC215**, AHIMA is leading the development of a new international interoperability standard for users – **Reference Standards Portfolio (RSP)**. RSP is an assembly of individual standards to support semantic, technical, and functional interoperability in a specific domain of care (clinical imaging, laboratory, medication management and other).

The first **RSP for Clinical Imaging** provides the end user a list of HIT standards and guidance needed to implement interoperable standards-based HIT applications in clinical imaging information systems. RSP is developed in collaboration with representatives from Australia, Canada, China, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Russia, UK and US.

### Building a Global Workforce to Support Interoperability

AHIMA collaborates with international organizations to standardize Global Competencies for HIT, HIM and Informatics developed by the AHIMA Foundation with a grant from the US Department of Commerce (<http://www.ahima.org/about/global/global-curricula>)

At the **ISO/TC215**, AHIMA leads the development of new educational standards:

- **ISO TR 18638 Health informatics—Guidance on Health Information Privacy Education in Healthcare Organizations**
- **ISO TS 22287 Health informatics—Workforce Roles and Capabilities for Terminology and Terminology Services in Healthcare**

TR-Technical Report; TS – Technical Specification

In addition, AHIMA continues working with academic institutions to extend current informatics curricula at the schools of medicine, public health and nursing to develop and deliver new training for **Content Management Specialists** and **Information Governance Specialists**.

### Get Involved

#### AHIMA Standards Task Force

Formed in 2014, the **AHIMA Standards Task Force** serves as a guiding body to develop AHIMA standards for information management practices in healthcare in collaboration with various SDOs (HL7, IHE, ISO/TC215, and others).

#### USTAG to ISO/TC215

As US delegates to **ISO/TC215** members of USTAG participate and influence standardization of the health data, information and knowledge to support and enable all aspects of the health systems nationally and globally.

For more information or to get involved in **AHIMA Standards** activities, please contact [standards@ahima.org](mailto:standards@ahima.org)

