Reliable Healthcare Data

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In celebration of Health Information Professionals (HIP) Week, American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) focuses on the theme of: “Reliable Information. Responsible Care.” When health information is reliable, patients can receive responsible care. Health information professionals are responsible for the successful management of health data and medical records needed to deliver quality healthcare to the public.

Healthcare data transformed into meaningful information should be an important concern for consumers, doctors, nurses and other healthcare providers, the healthcare industry, and the government. Standards (approved levels of quality), technologies, education, and research are required to capture, use, and maintain accurate healthcare data and help the transition from paper to electronic systems.1

The healthcare industry is driven by data. Data can come from many sources in healthcare such as patient laboratory tests and procedures. It is also transmitted from providers to payers to determine the appropriate payment for services provided to patients.

A consumer’s health record is a primary type of data source. When data is taken from the health record and then used for purposes such as databases and registries, it is considered a secondary data source. Examples of registries include birth, cancer, or cardiac registries.

A health information professional’s job includes managing the data and maintaining its quality. When data is wrong, it can lead to errors in patient care and other healthcare decision making. Data must be correct, dependable, and complete for the best consumer care possible. Healthcare data should also remain protected and confidential. Data security is controlling who can access a consumer’s health information to private care. Making sure a patient’s health information stays private is also known as data confidentiality. The federal law known as HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) provides both security and privacy regulations that entities such as hospitals and physician offices must obey. Consumers have many rights under HIPAA in regard to their protected health information (PHI) including the right to access and the right to request an amendment or change to their information.2

Reliable data is critical to the development of Health Information Exchanges (HIEs). A HIE is the electronic movement of health-related information between organizations according to national standards. Combining reliable health information with a HIE can result in increased quality and safety of care, improved public health and monitoring, and reduced healthcare costs.

The term “health informatics” can be defined as the transformation of data into health intelligence. AHIMA leads the health informatics and information management community to advance professional practice and standards. AHIMA recognizes that quality health and clinical data are critical resources needed for efficient healthcare and works to ensure the health information used in care, research, and health management is valid, accurate, complete, trustworthy, and timely.2

AHIMA offers several credentials in an effort to position HIM professionals as leaders and role models in the health informatics and information management community. AHIMA offers the option of certification with a Certified Health Data Analyst (CHDA) credential designation to HIM professionals who qualify. CHDAs achieve recognition of their expertise in health data analysis and validation of their mastery of this domain. This prestigious certification provides practitioners with the knowledge to acquire, manage, analyze, interpret, and transform data into accurate, consistent, and timely information, while balancing the “big picture” strategic vision with day-to-day details. CHDA-credentialed professionals show broad organizational knowledge and the ability to communicate with individuals and groups at multiple levels, both internal and external.3

References:
1. library.ahima.org/xpedio/groups/public/documents/ahima/bok1_047417.hcsp?dDocName=bok1_047417
2. ahima.org/about/aboutahima
3. ahima.org/certification/chda

QUIZ
1. AHIMA offers the following credential for certification in health data analysis expertise:
   a. CHPA       c. CHPS
   b. CHDA       d. CHIP

2. The term “health informatics” is the transformation of data into health intelligence.
   a. True       b. False

3. Which of the following is a primary type of data source?
   a. Patient name       c. Patient health record
   b. Patient phone number d. Physician name

4. The HIM professional’s role is not pertinent in maintaining data quality.
   a. True       b. False

5. A reliable HIE can result in:
   a. Improved public health
   b. Reduced healthcare costs
   c. Increased patient safety
   d. All the above