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.

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