



news

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AHIMA Announces 2018 Board President/Chair, New Board Members

Diann H. Smith elected to serve as President/Chair

CHICAGO (Jan. 2, 2018) — [American Health Information Management Association](#) (AHIMA) members elected Diann H. Smith, MS, RHIA, CHP, FAHIMA, as president/chair of the 2018 Board of Directors. Her one-year term began Jan.1.

In her role, Smith will work with the board to provide strategic direction to AHIMA, the preeminent nonprofit association for health information management (HIM) professionals who are responsible for protecting the accuracy of patient health information as well as safeguarding and preserving its privacy. The association represents more than 103,000 professionals.

Smith is Vice President of Health Information Management Services and Clinical Documentation Improvement at Texas Health Resources in Arlington, TX, an integrated health system with 29 hospital locations – including acute-care, short-stay, behavioral-health, rehabilitation and transitional care facilities – that are owned, operated or joint-ventured with Texas Health. Smith develops and executes system-wide standardization, efficiencies, and strategies that support the overall performance and quality improvement for Texas Health. She is a published author and experienced speaker on a variety of healthcare-related topics.

She has served as chair on the AHIMA Professional Ethics Committee, a director on the AHIMA board, president of the Texas Health Information Management Association (TXHIMA) and commissioner on the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM).

Smith earned a Master of Science in Human Relations and Business from Amberton University, as well as a Bachelor of Science in Health Information Management from Texas Woman's University. She is a fellow of AHIMA.

Smith has received several notable local and national awards including the TXHIMA Distinguished Member Award, outstanding leadership awards from the YWCA of Fort Worth and Tarrant County, TX, the AHIMA Triumph Leadership Award, and the 2016 Inspiring Women Award. Most recently, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, Xi Theta Omega Chapter, of which she is also an active member, presented Smith with the 2017 Woman of the Year community award.

On a more personal note, Smith is a proud breast cancer survivor and was the 2015 Ambassador for the American Cancer Society (ACS) North Texas Region. Smith's daughter,

Dee, succumbed to breast cancer in 2017, and Smith remains a strong supporter of breast cancer research and awareness. She currently serves on the ACS Advisory Board of Tarrant County, TX.

"Board members have an important role in steering the association toward a sustainable and successful future," said AHIMA interim CEO Pamela Lane, MS, RHIA. "This distinguished group will help us move forward and advance AHIMA's strategy."

"To reach new heights in our profession, AHIMA must keep our profession relevant and leverage strategies that will ensure our legacy in the healthcare industry," said Smith. "We are in a unique position to inspire leadership and influence change as an integral part of the larger healthcare ecosystem."

In addition to Smith's appointment, members selected a President/Chair-elect, Speaker of the House, and three members of the board of directors (who each will serve a three-year term):

- President/Chair-elect: **Valerie J. Watzlaf**, PhD, MPH, RHIA, FAHIMA, is associate professor in the department of HIM at the University of Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, PA. She also holds a secondary appointment in the Graduate School of Public Health, also at Pitt. She has worked as a HIM practitioner and consulted in several healthcare organizations in HIM, long-term care, and epidemiology. Watzlaf has chaired and served on multiple AHIMA committees and boards such as the Board of Directors of AHIMA, the AHIMA Foundation, and the Council for Excellence in Education. She has co-authored the textbook *Health Informatics Research Methods: Principles and Practice*. She is the recipient of numerous awards including the AHIMA Triumph Award for Research and the University of Pittsburgh's School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences Distinguished Alumnus Award.
- Speaker of the House: **Catherine Porto**, MPA, RHIA, CHP, is executive director of health information at the University of New Mexico Hospitals in Albuquerque, NM. She has served as a director on the AHIMA Board of Directors, as the team lead for member services, board liaison to the Practice Council on Physician Practice, Communities of Practice Advisory Task Force, and liaison to the Professional Resources Task Force. Porto has also served as a member of the AHIMA Triumph Awards Committee, a member of the Component State Association Advisory Task Force, and member of the House of Delegates Task Force. She has served four terms as president of the New Mexico Health Information Management Association and at least 12 House of Delegates terms.
- Director: **Seth J. Katz**, MPH, RHIA, FAHIMA, is the associate administrator of information management at Truman Medical Centers in Kansas City, MO. In addition to HIM, Katz focuses on strategic projects including referral management and improved patient access. For more than 10 years he has directed the transformation of Truman's HIM department to a fully electronic system; the department was awarded the 2013 Grace Award in recognition for these changes. Outside of Truman, he was the 2015-16 president of the Missouri Health Information Management Association and has served on various AHIMA committees. Additionally, Katz is consulting faculty for the HIM program at the University of Kansas Medical Center.

- Director: **Kim Theodos**, JD, MS, RHIA, is assistant professor of health studies at the University of Louisiana Monroe, teaching health informatics, healthcare leadership, and healthcare administration. She also serves as the program practicum coordinator and advisor for undergraduate health studies. Theodos has served as Louisiana Health Information Management Association president, treasurer, secretary, annual convention chair, and education strategy manager. She was a member of the AHIMA Annual Convention Program Committee for four years, serving as chair in 2015. The Louisiana Health Information Management Association named Theodos both Distinguished Member and Outstanding Volunteer.
- Director: **Melinda A. Wilkins**, PhD, RHIA, FAHIMA, is professor/director of health informatics and health information management programs at Arkansas Tech University. She has additionally worked in outpatient and inpatient settings as well as in consulting. Wilkins is a recent recipient of the AHIMA Leadership Triumph Award and has served in many volunteer roles at both the national and state level. Most recently she has served as the chair of the board of CAHIIM as well as a consultant for Arkansas's health information exchange efforts.

The AHIMA Board is responsible for setting long-term strategy and direction, governing the association's activities, and fulfilling the organization's fiduciary responsibility.

To further AHIMA's position as an industry leader, the 2018 Board will provide strategic guidance on information governance, informatics/analytics, and preparation for emerging HIM roles.

The AHIMA Board is composed of 13 elected members—including the president/chair, president/chair-elect, past president/chair, speaker of the house and nine directors at large; the CEO serves ex officio. A Board advisor also will continue to serve in 2018.

The newly elected members join the following current AHIMA Board Directors:

- **Danika E. Brinda**, PhD, RHIA, CHPS, HCISPP, associate professor at the College of St. Scholastica
- **Jill S. Clark**, MBA, RHIA, CHDA, FAHIMA, senior consultant and director of coding, e4
- **Ann F. Chenoweth**, MBA, RHIA, FAHIMA, senior director, industry relations at 3M Health Information Systems, will serve as 2018 past president/chair.
- **Ellen Shakespeare Karl**, MBA, RHIA, CHDA, FAHIMA, academic director for health information management programs and distinguished lecturer at the City University of New York's School of Professional Studies
- **Tim J. Keough**, MPA, RHIA, FAHIMA, vice president at the New Jersey Hospital Association, Healthcare Business Solutions
- **Anupam Goel**, MD, vice president of clinical information at Advocate Health Care, serves without vote as Advisor to the Board.

- **Susan G. Perkins**, RHIT, CCS, CHTS-IM, CHC, senior operations manager, Baptist Premier Medical Group
- **Karen S. Scott**, MEd, RHIA, CCS-P, FAHIMA, senior training specialist, TruCode
- **Pamela L. Lane**, MS, RHIA, interim chief executive officer, AHIMA, serves as an ex-officio member of the Board without vote.

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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