



news

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Preparing for the Future of the HIM Profession

HIM professionals must exit their comfort zones, survey results show

CHICAGO – May 17, 2018 –The rapid implementation of electronic health record (EHR) systems and advances in technology including computer assisted coding (CAC) means health information management (HIM) professionals must develop new skills to remain relevant, according to a recent study on specific job skills and competencies that align with healthcare organizations' future needs.

In the article, "[New Market Research Supports HIM Reimagined's Call for Professional Adaptation](#)" in the May issue of the *Journal of AHIMA*, the monthly publication of the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), authors discuss results of a 2017 survey indicating a growing shift in skills necessary for working with health information. This shift, according to survey results of both clinical and non-clinical senior level HIM professionals, requires a focus on specialization and educational advancement within the HIM workforce to successfully work within the increasingly complex healthcare environment.

The study was conducted as part of AHIMA's HIM Reimagined (HIMR) initiative, with the goal of identifying academic and professional advancement opportunities for HIM professionals.

"As evolving technology changes the way health information is gathered and shared, HIM professionals are poised to lead the healthcare community in ensuring health information is accurate, accessible and secure," AHIMA CEO Wylecia Wiggs Harris, PhD, CAE. "To prepare for future needs of the industry, AHIMA encourages its members to explore options to advance their careers and opportunities to lead within their organizations, including educational training and certifications."

Authors of the article dive further into the primary findings of the study by suggesting three HIM readiness solutions:

1. Specialization and educational advancement is vital to adopt, use, advance and adapt to new technologies at a rapid pace. HIM professionals should pursue advanced education and leadership roles to further develop interpersonal skills needed to interact with clinicians and lead projects and teams.
2. Identifying opportunities for HIM professionals to develop new specialties will expand the breadth of skills needed to operate in an ever-changing field. According to AHIMA, nearly half of all HIM professionals enter a coding-related role; however, survey results

say computer-assisted-coding has brought forward a potential risk of automation.

3. HIM professionals must develop “hard skills” for future workplace roles that are teachable and can be defined and measured, such as leading in data analytics and informatics.

“HIM is a diverse profession, with new and changing roles emerging in order to advance the healthcare industry as a whole,” said Dr. Harris. “With the goals of HIM Reimagined validated by this study, HIM professionals must show their resiliency and pursue roles outside their comfort zones to meet the future needs of the industry.”

Also in this issue

Disclosing Substance Use Records in the Digital Age

In early 2018, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) modernized the Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient Records regulations. Among those changes: allowing written disclosure of substance use disorder (SUD) patient records. In the article, “[Operationalizing the Changes to 42 CFR Part 2, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient Records](#),” authors discuss how HIM professionals can adapt to the changes and continue to ensure all SUD patient records are disclosed in accordance with HIPAA.

Read these articles and more in the May issue of the *Journal of AHIMA* or online at journal.ahima.org.

Recognition for the *Journal of AHIMA*

The *Journal of AHIMA* magazine and website have been [recognized](#) with several editorial and design excellence awards from the American Society of Business Publication Editors (ASBPE) and the American Society of Healthcare Publication Editors (ASHPE).

The *Journal* website slideshow “Release of Information vs. ‘The Experts’” was issued the National Bronze Award for Best Photo Gallery/Slide Show by ASBPE.

The *Journal* also received two awards from ASHPE, including a bronze award for Best Cover (“Making HIPAA Work for Consumers” – March 2017) and a gold award for Best Computer-Generated Opening Page/Spread (“Money Troubles” – September 2017).

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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