



news

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## Guardians of the PHI Disclosures

*Journal of AHIMA addresses releasing patient information across an enterprise*

**CHICAGO – April 16, 2018** – Executing the disclosure of protected health information (PHI) requires a two-fold approach – health information management (HIM) professionals must work to protect patients’ privacy while simultaneously releasing their information to authorized individuals. Largely due to the high volume of requests for disclosure of medical information, recent trends show healthcare professionals are sharing medical information, often without the guidance of a HIM professional, which can result in human errors and privacy breaches.

The article “[Keep Your Seawall Secure](#),” from the April issue of the *Journal of AHIMA*, the monthly publication of the [American Health Information Management Association](#) (AHIMA), discusses how to ensure safe and compliant enterprise-wide release of health information.

“HIM professionals are in a unique position to both execute the exchange of health information and train healthcare professionals to do so in a compliant way,” said AHIMA CEO Wylecia Wiggs Harris, PhD. “When non-HIM departments insist on managing their own PHI disclosures, HIM professionals can act as a guardian of the information through collaboration and innovation with the enterprise.”

Challenges that occur when non-HIM departments release information include lack of training in PHI disclosure rules, human errors due to high volumes of requests, and an increased risk for privacy breaches. Authors of the article discuss the importance of HIM professionals being aware of these risks and how to conduct an enterprise wide audit as well as lead release of information (ROI) training.

Through effective ROI training, HIM professionals can educate non-HIM departments on disclosure management fundamentals such as:

- Tracking and monitoring requests
- Defining requests based on HIPAA provisions
- Emphasizing accuracy
- Defining a minimum necessary for requests
- Properly responding to patient or patient’s family requests
- Including a HIM professional in the process

## **Also in this issue**

### **Get to Know AHIMA's New CEO**

AHIMA's newly appointed CEO shares her goals for the organization and where she sees the HIM profession going in a Q&A with *Journal* editor Chris Dimick. The interview, "[Meet Wylecia Wiggs Harris](#)," introduces AHIMA members and the HIM community to Dr. Harris – and her transformational ideas.

### **Information Governance Improves Patient Matching**

Accurate patient identification and matching is critical to ensuring the integrity of patient information, which leads to better care outcomes. With the continual adoption of information governance (IG) programs by the healthcare industry nationwide, organizations can benefit from IG's ability to improve patient matching through stronger data accuracy and consistency in the electronic health record. The article, "[Information Governance Addresses Patient Matching Initiatives](#)," discusses the current risks associated with inaccurate patient matching and how IG can mitigate those risks.

Read these articles and more in the April issue of the *Journal of AHIMA* or online at [journal.ahima.org](http://journal.ahima.org).

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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](http://www.ahima.org)