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Electronic Data Exchange is the Future of Healthcare

*Deputy Chief Health Informatics Officer for CMS delivers 2019 government update
on interoperability and the Patient Access Initiative at AHIMA19*

CHICAGO - September 18, 2019 – Access to data and the interoperability of health information has the power to change the face of healthcare, according to Alexandra Mugge, deputy chief health informatics officer at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

Addressing leaders in health information management (HIM) at the [AHIMA19: Health Data and Information Conference](#), the American Health Information Management Association's (AHIMA) annual conference, Mugge outlined CMS' Interoperability and Patient Access Initiative efforts and what the agency will focus on next.

"We believe electronic data exchange is the future of healthcare, and interoperability is the foundation of value-based care," Mugge said. "CMS is dedicated to advancing interoperability throughout healthcare."

Emphasizing that the privacy and security of health records underpins all CMS activity on interoperability, Mugge pointed to several initiatives in 2019 aimed at improving data exchange among providers, payers and patients, including:

- The CMS interoperability and patient access proposed rule addressing new policies to expand the exchange of information across all aspects of healthcare
- The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) 21st Century Cures Act proposed rule

- The Blue Button 2.0 initiative, an application programming interface (API) containing four years of Medicare Part A, B and D data for 53 million Medicare beneficiaries that allows patient access to their health information.

Looking ahead to 2020, Mugge said CMS will focus on addressing challenges to patient matching, updating provider directories, expanding data elements to be standardized and incorporating behavioral and public health social determinants in healthcare.

HIM professionals are essential to ensuring access to health information where and when it is needed, Mugge said, adding that HIM professionals are responsible for shaping the data that ultimately comes together as a part of a patient's complete healthcare picture.

"CMS is a valued contributor to our ongoing support of interoperability and its benefits to patients, providers and payers," said Wylecia Wiggs Harris, AHIMA CEO, PhD, CAE. "AHIMA stands in alignment with the goals of interoperability in helping people to live healthier lives and creating access to health information that empowers people to impact health."

The digitization and expansion of access to data and health information will continue to change healthcare, making this an exciting time in the industry, Mugge added.

"Patients are no longer passive participants in their care, they now have the ability to be empowered consumers of the healthcare industry through access to data that puts them in the driver's seat to make the best and most informed decisions about their health," Mugge said. "And providers who have historically been forced to work with incomplete information can now unlock large amounts of data about their patients that will improve care."

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 in health information and to actively contributing to the development and advancement of health information professionals worldwide. AHIMA's mission is to empower people to impact health. www.ahima.org