Population Health Management: The ‘Next Frontier’
New Model Highlights Need for Data Governance, Analytics

CHICAGO – July 30, 2013 – The imperative to reduce healthcare costs and remedy lack of access and disparities in care have led the healthcare industry to regard population health management programs as a strategic initiative for the future. For the health information management (HIM) profession, population health management represents a new and promising professional opportunity. This trend is highlighted in an article in the August 2013 *Journal of AHIMA*.

“*The Next HIM Frontier*” defines population health management as an initiative that aims to create a patient population that is as healthy as possible and reduce the need for expensive interventions like tests, emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and procedures. The goal is to “keep the healthy as well as possible through preventative care, and prevent the chronically ill from getting sicker and therefore reducing costs,” the article says.

“Two years ago, the authors of AHIMA’s Core Model found that expanding into population and community health is an opportunity for HIM professionals to help the healthcare industry reach new insights and create innovative solutions to healthcare problems,” said AHIMA CEO Lynne Thomas Gordon, MBA, RHIA, CAE, FACHE, FAHIMA. “AHIMA is committed to leading the profession to become leaders in this area and to be recognized as innovative forces in the industry.”

As data stewards, “HIM professionals are critical to the success of information governance and data analytics” in emerging population health management programs, the article says. To succeed, population health management will require practitioners to use various forms of data when conducting data analysis, such as clinical data, claims data, administrative data, and self-reported patient data.

The article notes that “The current tools organizations use aren’t up to the task of population health management because they don’t have the ability to store, manage, and distribute comprehensive, timely, and relevant information to the degree needed.” But such tools are likely to evolve in the future.

In the meantime, the article says, HIM professionals can prepare themselves for their most critical task, ensuring the integrity of information at the point of care, by:
embracing population health management and creatively developing new analytic tools and techniques
excelling in terminology, coding, and classification systems
focusing on clinical documentation integrity
mastering the principles in the AHIMA Code of Ethics to ensure proper data stewardship

Also in this issue

The August issue of the Journal of AHIMA also includes:

- A look at the way HIM professionals’ careers and education are evolving beyond paper records and into the electronic age in “HIM’s Evolving Workforce.”

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

###

About AHIMA
Celebrating its 85th anniversary this year, the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) represents more than 67,000 educated health information management professionals in the United States and around the world. AHIMA is committed to promoting and advocating for high quality research, best practices and effective standards in health information and to actively contributing to the development and advancement of health information professionals worldwide. AHIMA’s enduring goal is quality healthcare through quality information. www.ahima.org