Avoiding the Five Risky HIE Practices that Threaten Data Integrity

Journal of AHIMA article advocates strong data integrity best practices

CHICAGO – Nov. 4, 2013 – Health information exchange organizations (HIOs) offer a number of potential benefits to patients, providers, and stakeholders by ensuring that clinicians have access to the information they need when they need it. However, system issues, stakeholder demands, and resource limitations have forced many HIOs to use sub-par data integrity processes that could compromise their long term success, according to an article in the November/December Journal of AHIMA, "Five Risky HIE Practices that Threaten Data Integrity."

According to the article, the five risky practices are:

- Relying on weak algorithms to manage duplicate records, increasing the chance of creating potentially dangerous patient records
- Failing to include HIM staff in implementing record-matching algorithms, creating a lack of understanding on what constitutes critical data or where that data resides on the patient record
- Failure to manage ongoing data integrity, instead of taking steps to remove duplicate records and prevent the creation of new ones
- Lack of standard interfaces and automated processes, relying instead on manual processes.
- Establishing weak governance processes, which may allow bad data to pollute the system

To avoid these dangers and eliminate the problems caused by dirty or duplicate data, HIOs are advised to implement strong data integrity best practices, including:

- Using advanced duplicate matching algorithms to strengthen those built into systems to reduce the number of duplicates identified
- Establish strong governance policies for ongoing data integrity at the participant and HIO levels
- Automate data mapping, integrity audits, duplicate data monitoring, identification, and reconciliation and other manual processes whenever possible
• Look to health information management (HIM) staff to design, implement, and manage the processes by which duplicate and overlaid records are assessed and their cause determined.
• HIM staff can also pinpoint the causes of data integrity issues and provide additional training and education where needed.

"AHIMA believes that information governance is critical to the future of healthcare," said AHIMA CEO Lynne Thomas Gordon, MBA, RHIA, FACHE, CAE, FAHIMA. "HIM professionals can be key industry resources for ensuring that organizations are using best practices to manage information as a critical business asset throughout its life cycle."

Also in this issue

The November/December issue of the Journal of AHIMA also includes:

• HIM experts are making a hard push for information governance. "Keeping Information Clean" describes why healthcare leaders are starting to take information governance seriously.
• An updated practice brief, "Data Standards, Data Quality, and Interoperability," offers an understanding of data standards as a tool to enable interoperability and promote data quality.

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

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