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Electronic Health Records at Tipping Point

Journal of AHIMA analyzes state of EHR implementation, outlines opportunities for Health Information Management professionals

CHICAGO – March 5, 2014 – Now that more than 50 percent of eligible professionals (mostly physicians) and 80 percent of eligible hospitals have adopted Electronic Health Records (EHRs) and achieved meaningful use, what needs to happen next for EHRs to reach their full potential?

This question is analyzed in the cover story, "[Healthcare Reaches the EHR Tipping Point](#)," of the March *Journal of AHIMA*. The article enumerates some of the benefits of EHR adoption, such as more timely information and improved care, as well as challenges such as changes to physician workflow and the need for standards.

"The heavy adoption of EHRs by providers is a significant milestone, one that can contribute to improved patient outcomes at reduced costs," said AHIMA CEO Lynne Thomas Gordon, MBA, RHIA, CAE, FACHE, FAHIMA. "HIM professionals will play an important role in realizing the efficiencies offered by interoperable EHRs, and a key component will be establishing information governance principles to ensure the information is accurate, appropriately accessible and actionable."

In the *Journal* article, Judy Murphy, RN, FACMI, FHIMSS, FAAN, deputy national coordinator for programs and policy at the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC), drew an analogy between EHR interoperability and advances in telecommunications.

"If you buy a telephone, it's only as good as the other people who have telephones and can call," she said. "One of the things we're doing with getting EHRs installed is that we're setting up the capabilities and electronically exchanging the information so we can create a patient-centric record."

Mary Radley, RHIA, director of HIM management at Boston Children's Hospital, said this is the most exciting time she can remember to be working in the field.

"A lot of committees I work on are high nursing and physician-based dealing with information management," she said. "It's been rewarding that they're getting it. They're understanding that

when it's electronic it still needs protections. I never really interacted with physicians in the way we do today when we were (working) with paper records.”

Also in this issue

The March issue of the *Journal of AHIMA* also includes:

- The explosion of social media has changed the way the world communicates. It also presents opportunities and challenges for healthcare practitioners. How does communication with a patient over e-mail or another form of electronic media get documented and included in the patient's medical record? This issue – and the importance of information governance principles for social media – is explored in the article "[Status Update: Social Media Exchanges are Sometimes Part of the Health Record](#) .”
- The practice brief, "[Privacy and Security Audits of Electronic Health Information](#),” defines and explains the necessary components for a successful security audit strategy. Additionally, it outlines considerations for legal and regulatory requirements, how to evaluate and retain audit logs and the overall audit process.

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

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About AHIMA

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) represents more than 71,000 educated health information management professionals and health informatics 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.

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