



news

233 N. Michigan Ave., 21st Fl.
Chicago, IL 60601

phone >>(312) 233-1100
fax >>(312) 233-1090
web >>www.ahima.org

For more information, please contact:

Bridget Stratton

AHIMA

312-233-1097

bridget.stratton@ahima.org

**AHIMA Honors 17 for Outstanding Contributions
to Health Information Management**

AHIMA Triumph Awards ceremony held to recognize professionals and students

SAN DIEGO – Sept. 29, 2014 – The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) honored members at its annual AHIMA Triumph Awards ceremony today. The awards recognize excellence, dedication and service of health information management (HIM) professionals who have made significant contributions to the field.

The awards were presented by Marion Gentul, RHIA, CCS, chair of the AHIMA Triumph Awards Committee during AHIMA's 86th Annual Convention and Exhibit in San Diego.

"The AHIMA Triumph Awards are an important way to recognize and thank those in our professional community who make a difference for the world of health information management," said AHIMA CEO Lynne Thomas Gordon, MBA, RHIA, CAE, FACHE, FAHIMA. "The 2014 award winners represent the greatest talent, leadership and intelligence that we have in this field. They are advocates for the healthcare industry and role models for all."

Distinguished Member Award

Bonnie S. Cassidy, MPA, RHIA, FAHIMA, FHIMSS, is the 2014 recipient of AHIMA's highest honor, the Distinguished Member Award. Her volunteer service on national, state, and local levels spans three decades and includes more than 50 appointed and elected positions. Among them, she served as president of the AHIMA Board of Directors, president of the Ohio Health Information Management Association, representative to the AHIMA House of Delegates, chair of the AHIMA Fellowship Committee, and AHIMA Nominating Committee, Commissioner, board member and chair-elect of the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM), member of the editorial review board for the *Journal of AHIMA*, and member of the AHIMA Panel of Accreditation Surveyors.

Advocacy and Public Policy Award

Linda L. Renn, RHIT, CCS, CPC, CPC-H, CHTS-TR, is being honored with the Advocacy and Public Policy Award, which recognizes those whose efforts have advanced AHIMA's capacity to achieve its mission and supported HIM through involvement in AHIMA's advocacy and public policy efforts. She has advanced legislative initiatives that promote the interests and awareness of the HIM profession at many levels. In conjunction with HIP Week for the last two years, Renn has been intimately involved in the planning, scheduling, and organizing of the Florida Health Information Management Association's Hill Day.

Educator Award

Joanne D. Valerius, PhD, MPH, RHIA, received the Educator Award for excellence in preparing the next generation of professionals for their HIM careers. For more than 40 years, Valerius has served as a coach and mentor and has dedicated a large portion of her career to education. Through her dissertation, "Experiences of Health Information Managers with 20+ Years of Experiences in the Complex and Ever-Changing Healthcare Environment," Valerius gained a better understanding of how change has affected the health information manager, specifically the transformation from a paper-based to an electronic health record.

Innovation Award

Joan C. Hicks, MSHI, RHIA, is the recipient of AHIMA's Innovation Award for her focus on moving HI/HIM into the future of the healthcare and wellness industry. Hicks' expertise and knowledge of HIM principles has been key to improving the quality and delivery of healthcare. In 2004, Hicks assumed the position of Chief Information Officer for the University of Alabama at Birmingham Health System. As CIO, Hicks has guided the vision, values, strategic plan, governance and operational effectiveness to bring many innovations to both her organization and the industry.

Leadership Award

Diann H. Brown-Smith, MS, RHIA, CHP, FAHIMA, is honored with AHIMA's Leadership Award. Brown-Smith has acted as a leader in her more than 30 years in HIM, including holding positions as director, advisor, AHIMA board member and educator. Brown-Smith led the successful consolidation of 14 HIM departments within an 18 month period, putting her at the forefront of advancing the HIM professional.

Carolyn R. Kirk-Valo, MS, RHIT, FAHIMA, also was selected as a recipient of the Leadership Award. With more than three decades of experience and leadership in HIM, Kirk-Valo exemplifies a positive professional image for others in the industry. She serves as a senior specialist for Siemens Healthcare and works to break down the complexity of regulatory requirements that customers face, such as the ICD-10 transition. Kirk-Valo has served as a leader for AHIMA as well, receiving the 2006 Fellow designation, member of the AHIMA Foundation Board of Directors and chairing the Fellowship Committee in 2012.

Kathy Westhafer, RHIA, CHPS, also received the Leadership Award for her 30-plus years of experience in HIM, both in traditional hospital roles and as a hospital system and statewide leader in enterprise data management. Westhafer has been a member of the HIM Advisory Board at Delaware Technical Community College since 1995. She championed the medical coding studies program at the college and, more recently, the HIM associate degree program.

Literacy Legacy Award

Lynn Kuehn, MS, RHIA, CCS-P, FAHIMA, and **Therese Jorwic**, MPH, RHIA, CCS, CCS-P, FAHIMA, have made a meaningful contribution to the HIM profession knowledge base with their publication, *ICD-10-PCS: An Applied Approach*. The textbook is the premier publication on how to code using the ICD-10-PCS coding system. It provides the foundation for students and practitioners to learn a coding system unlike any coding system previously experienced in the US. As co-authors of this landmark text, Ms. Kuehn and Ms. Jorwic understand the importance of providing the healthcare industry with a key publication to teach the ICD-10-PCS coding system. They were pioneers in developing this publication and have provided the HIM industry with a wonderful resource for years to come.

Patricia L. Shaw, MEd, RHIA, FAHIMA, is also a recipient of the Literacy Legacy Award for 2014. Shaw has written and reviewed several texts and books. She is the lead author for *Quality and Performance Improvement in Healthcare: A Tool for Programmed Learning, Fifth Edition*, a text used by many HIM programs, and the author of *Registered Health Information Administrator (RHIA) Exam Preparation*.

Donna J. Slovensky, PhD, RHIA, FAHIMA, has been selected as a Literacy Legacy Award winner for the numerous book chapters and journals she has authored and edited. Slovensky is currently engaged as a co-editor of the forthcoming *Handbook of Healthcare Management Research*. She has collaborated with several colleagues on projects during her 30-plus year career.

Susan White, PhD, RHIA, CHDA, also is receiving the Literacy Legacy Award. White has proven herself as an HIM leader by not only having several publications in peer-reviewed journals, but also by authoring several books, book chapters and technical reports. White completed the first AHIMA CHDA exam preparation book. She has presented complex material, such as data mining, data analytics and predictive modeling, in an understandable way.

Mentor Award

Susan P. Scully, MS, RHIA, CCS, CCS-P, is a recipient of the Mentor Award. As director of the Health Information Technology Program at Burlington County College, Pemberton, NJ, Scully has passionately promoted the HIM profession and has served as an excellent role model. She is making a lasting, positive difference in the lives of so many HIM students and colleagues.

Research Award

Alice Noblin, PhD, RHIA, CCS, received the Research Award. As the program director and assistant professor of the health informatics and information management program at the University of Central Florida, Noblin is a recognized leader. Her dissertation research topic discussed how patients and providers communicate through electronic personal health records, and her work has been published in countless journals on an international level.

Rising Star Award

Megan Munns, RHIA, is honored with AHIMA's Rising Star Award, which recognizes individuals who embody the hope for the future of the HIM profession. Despite having graduated just a few years ago, Munns has already handled the electronic health record implementation across 11 hospitals and a number of clinics and is currently serving as a project manager for Just

Associates. She specializes in data integrity and quality solutions, taking on many leadership roles through various managerial level projects.

Student Award

Kaley Schnitker, CCA, is a recipient of this year's Student Award, which honors a student member with high academic achievement who trains in a Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM) accredited or AHIMA-approved coding program. Schnitker recently graduated magna cum laude from the HIM program at the University of Central Florida. She is involved with the Florida Health Information Management Association and the Student Health Information Management Association at UCF (SHIMA). Schnitker epitomizes the academic and leadership skills that the Student Award recognizes and encourages.

Janice Wishart, RHIT, is also recognized with the Student Award. Wishart recently graduated summa cum laude from the Health Informatics and Information Management division of Allied Health Sciences at Florida A&M University. She is a nontraditional student who returned to college for her baccalaureate degree in the field she has worked in for nearly 20 years. Wishart has emphasized advancing her career and pursuing academic excellence through professional development.

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About AHIMA

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

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