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Information Governance Principles Key To Trustworthy Health Information

AHIMA unveils information governance framework for healthcare at AHIMA Convention

SAN DIEGO – Sept. 30, 2014 – To guide healthcare organizations in adopting information governance (IG), AHIMA unveiled the first [Information Governance Principles for Healthcare™ \(IGPHC\)](#) during its 86th annual Convention and Exhibit in San Diego today.

A set of eight principles, the IGPHC form the basis for an effective IG accountability framework to ensure complete, timely and accurate clinical and non-clinical information. Reliable information is essential to meeting healthcare organizations' patient care, safety and operational goals.

"Healthcare organizations have an obligation to treat information as an asset and to define the policies and practices for governing use of that information," said AHIMA CEO Lynne Thomas Gordon, MBA, RHIA, CAE, FACHE, FAHIMA. "These principles will help organizations establish policies and determine accountabilities for governing information so that information can reliably support strategy, operations, legal and other responsibilities."

Adapted from ARMA International's Generally Accepted Record Keeping Principles®, the IGPHC were written specifically for healthcare organizations and are part of AHIMA's efforts to make IG a priority for the industry.

Despite the diversity in the industry, all information in healthcare organizations should be governed using the principles of accountability, transparency, integrity, protection, compliance, availability, retention and disposition, as defined in the IGPHC.

"While the growing volume of information is certainly an information integrity challenges, there are far greater challenge to ensuring trust and integrity that IG will address These include the current state of interoperability and lack of rules and standards for documenting in the electronic environment," said AHIMA EVP/Operations and Chief Operating Officer Deborah Green, MBA, RHIA. "Challenges such as these make adherence to an IG program crucial to information use and exchange. Adopting these principles will serve the best interest of patients, providers, insurers, public health officials and policymakers."

During AHIMA's convention, Green presented the IGPHC with Galina Datskovsky, PhD, CRM, consultant and facilitator and past president of ARMA International and CEO of Covertix North America.

"The health information you have is the currency of today's healthcare system," Datskovsky said. "These principles form the basis on which every IG program should be rated and judged."

Definitions for each of the IGPHC are:

- **Principle of Accountability:** An accountable member of senior leadership shall oversee the IG program and delegate responsibility for information management to appropriate individuals.
- **Principle of Transparency:** An organization's processes and activities relating to IG shall be documented in an open and verifiable manner.
- **Principle of Integrity:** An IG program shall be constructed so the information generated by, managed for, and provided to the organization has a reasonable and suitable guarantee of authenticity and reliability.
- **Principle of Protection:** An IG program must ensure that the appropriate levels of protection from breach, corruption and loss are provided for information that is private, confidential, secret, classified, essential to business continuity, or otherwise requires protection.
- **Principle of Compliance:** An IG program shall be constructed to comply with applicable laws, regulations, standards and organizational policies.
- **Principle of Availability:** An organization shall maintain information in a manner that ensures timely, accurate, and efficient retrieval.
- **Principle of Retention:** An organization shall maintain its information for an appropriate time, taking into account its legal, regulatory, fiscal, operational, risk and historical requirements.
- **Principle of Disposition:** An organization shall provide secure and appropriate disposition for information no longer required to be maintained by applicable laws and the organization's policies.

At a convention session Wednesday, Oct. 1, Green will provide additional details on how the principles can be applied to an IG program in [AHIMA's Framework for Governing Information in Healthcare](#) with co-presenter Mary Reeves, RHIA, assistant vice president of HIM operations and clinical documentation improvement at RegionalCare Hospital Partners.

Other highlights of AHIMA's continued work on IG include conducting the first [survey](#) on the state of IG in healthcare in conjunction with Cohasset Associates and a resulting white paper, convening healthcare leaders and stakeholders to develop a healthcare IG framework, establishing an expert advisory group to provide input on IG development efforts.

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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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