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Engaging Patients in Their Own Healthcare

Journal of AHIMA Practice Brief Outlines Best Practices

CHICAGO – Sept. 2, 2015 – Health information management (HIM) professionals can play an important role in helping patients learn more about their medical care. This topic is the focus of an in-depth practice brief, "[HIM Best Practices for Engaging Consumers in Their Overall Healthcare](#)," in the September issue of the *Journal of AHIMA*.

A complementary story, "[Mastering the Inbox Information Era](#)," illustrates how the increasing volume of patient-generated data and the expansion of mobile health are changing the management of health information.

"It is an exciting time for both patients and HIM professionals," said American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) CEO Lynne Thomas Gordon, MBA, RHIA, CAE, FACHE, FAHIMA. "HIM professionals are ideally suited to help patients become more engaged with their health and their health information, while making sure that the information exchange is private, secure and available when it is needed."

According to the practice brief, the United States' focus on engaging consumers in their health and wellness is propelled by a number of federal initiatives including the "meaningful use" Electronic Health Record (EHR) incentive program and clinical quality measured based on the value of care provided.

The practice brief highlights how many healthcare professionals communicate with patients through e-mail or the Internet with a patient portal. There are many advantages of this such as routine questions being answered without an office visit, test results being shared efficiently complete with additional instructions, and information on medications. At the same time, according to the practice brief, "the use of e-mail technology must be balanced with patient confidentiality and the patient's right to privacy. HIM professionals can assist in developing policies and procedures for use of e-mail as well as the patient portal. If using e-mail to communicate with patients, it must be encrypted to ensure that it is secure."

Also in this issue:

- The article, "[Evaluating the Information Governance Principles for Healthcare: Retention and Disposition](#)," is the fourth and final part of a series on AHIMA's eight Information Governance Principles for Healthcare™ (IGPHC). The retention principle says "an organization shall maintain its information for an appropriate time, taking it account its legally, regulatory, fiscal, operational, risk, and historical requirements." The disposition principle states that an organization should ensure "secure and appropriate disposition for information no longer required to be maintained by applicable laws and the organization's policies."

Read these articles and more in the September 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 101,000 health information 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