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## **Innovation Meets Patient Identification**

*Journal of AHIMA highlights potential innovative solutions to patient matching challenges*

**CHICAGO – August 21, 2017** – Healthcare initiatives aimed at improving quality care, such as data analytics, population health and consumer engagement, have increased the need for real-time patient identification and record matching. However, many organizations have hundreds of thousands—or even millions—of electronic records that can't be used in these transformational activities because they can't automatically be matched or linked to other records.

The article, "[Applying Innovation to the Patient Identification Challenge](#)," in the August issue of the *Journal of AHIMA*, discusses innovations to help meet these challenges and move the healthcare industry beyond the traditional human resource-heavy, reactive approach to forward-thinking, accurate, automated patient identification and record matching. It also outlines steps health information management professionals can take when implementing their own innovative solutions.

"The key to innovation in patient identity goes beyond staying up to date with recent technologies – it involves a strategic data governance process," said AHIMA interim CEO Pamela Lane, MS, RHIA. "Once a solid plan is in place, professionals can leverage the digital assets, such as cloud-based services and other data services, to approach this issue in a complete manner."

One way professionals are approaching innovation in patient identification and records is through cloud-based computing, which has been accepted by several industries to easily access information and incorporate secure external data services into critical business processes. Cloud-based services solve a common problem with patient records – demographic data recorded at one facility may not exactly match what is recorded at another. This real-time automation of the cloud serves as an innovative response to this challenge, ensuring that records always stay up-to-date.

Another method includes installing neural networks technology, or machine learning, that can use fingerprint analysis and facial recognition to minimize patient matching errors. Provider organizations and payers also continue to develop the concept of unique patient identifiers, which can be held by a third party and server as proprietary identifiers to the vendor and its customers.

Regardless of the innovation created to solve this challenge, it is important for healthcare organizations and professionals to keep steps in mind in approaching this process, including:

- Getting the right business people involved, including individuals who handle patient access/registration, health information management, technology and analytics.
- Considering data creation processes, along with data governance through standardization of procedures.
- Identifying data goals and incorporating them into the structure of the program.

Such guidance in applying innovation will benefit the healthcare ecosystem as it continues to become more digitized.

#### **Also in this issue:**

In a healthcare world where personal healthcare information is becoming increasingly targeted, health information professionals are seeking ways to protect and properly handle health records. The article "[Making Sense of Employee Health Record Regulations](#)" outlines some of the key issues for employers related to employee healthcare information, and suggests steps to consider in developing an appropriate compliance and regulatory approach for this information.

Read these articles and more in the August issue of the *Journal of AHIMA* or online at [journal.ahima.org](http://journal.ahima.org).

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#### **About AHIMA**

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) represents more than 103,000 health information professionals in the United States and around the world. AHIMA is committed to promoting and advocating for best practices and effective standards in health information and to actively contributing to the development and advancement of health information professionals worldwide. AHIMA is advancing informatics, data analytics, and information governance to achieve the goal of providing expertise to ensure trusted information for healthcare. [www.ahima.org](http://www.ahima.org)