2026 AHIMA Advocacy Agenda

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) mission of empowering people to impact health is rooted in our founder's belief that great possibilities are achieved when we work together towards a common goal. At AHIMA, our common goal is to transform health and healthcare by connecting people, systems, and ideas. This starts with health information (HI) because it is the most powerful currency for change in the healthcare ecosystem. The 2026 AHIMA Advocacy Agenda leverages our knowledge and expertise of health information to influence the public policy environment for the benefit of individuals, communities, and HI professionals.

Our agenda promotes policies to:

1
Ensure the Quality, Integrity, and Usability of Health Information

2
Improve Individuals' Health Journeys through Access to Information, Protecting Privacy, and the Collection, Sharing, and Use of Social Determinants of Health

3
Advance Healthcare Transformation

To advance our public policy agenda, AHIMA will work together with our members, the US Congress, the Trump Administration, national healthcare organizations, and other stakeholders.

Ensure the Quality, Integrity, and Usability of Health Information

Promote Access to Accurate, Timely, and Complete Information

Timely access to quality information is foundational to improving health outcomes and lowering the cost of healthcare. Information must be complete, accurate, usable, standards-based, and timely. It should reflect the scope of services provided and empower stakeholders, including patients, providers, and payers, to make the best care decisions and seek appropriate reimbursement.

Critical to maintaining data quality, integrity, and usability is the ability to **accurately match patients to their medical record**. A combination of technology, standards, operational processes, and trained health information professionals are needed to optimize accurate patient identification. Working with the Patient ID Now Coalition, AHIMA led the re-introduction of HR 2002, the MATCH IT Act of 2025, to improve patient identification and matching.

Strengthen the Health Information Workforce

Ensuring the quality, integrity, and usability of health information requires **strengthening the current and future HI workforce.** As healthcare organizations increasingly rely on digital tools, including artificial intelligence (AI), skills are needed to support data sharing, analytics, data governance, and ongoing testing and maintenance of such tools while maintaining the confidentiality, privacy, and security of individuals' health information. Such advancements will alter existing job functions, leading to increased specialization and require upskilling of existing and future workforces.

Improved Oversight of Artificial Intelligence

AI tools have the potential to transform healthcare delivery and the workforce and are top of mind for organizations as the industry continues to experience workforce shortages, staff turnover, and burnout. A 2023 AHIMA-NORC study found that two-thirds of HI professionals reported understaffing at their organizations which led to employee burnout, staff turnover, slower claims processing, and lower data quality.[1] AI tools create an opportunity to address these challenges. However, improved oversight of AI is needed as its implementation and use raise questions around accuracy, transparency, governance, data provenance, potential harm, liability,

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Where AHIMA Stands

Promote and advance the collection, use, and exchange of high-quality health information to support clinical decision-making, operational excellence, and appropriate reimbursement.

Advocate for accurate and reliable patient identification and matching to improve patient safety, information sharing, and reduce administrative burden.

Where AHIMA Stands

Promote policies that ensure HI professionals meet the health information needs of today and tomorrow.

Where AHIMA Stands

Advocate for and influence policies that promote appropriate oversight and sufficient protections related to the implementation and use of AI, while encouraging innovative technological advancements and avoiding excessive burden for end-users.

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[1] Available at: https://www.norc.org/content/dam/norc-org/pdf2023/AHIMA-Workforce-Survey-Report-Final-2023.pdf

and intellectual property rights. In 2024, the Assistant Secretary for Technology Policy (ASTP) issued the HTI-1 Final Rule, which seeks to improve transparency around how automated decision support intervention (DSI) tools function by requiring certified health IT systems to share information with end-users about how DSI tools are trained and the data used to train them. Removal of the DSI transparency requirements reduces end-user trustworthiness in such tools and is counterintuitive to the aim of increasing AI adoption. More recently, in 2025, the White House released America's AI Action Plan[2], focused on positioning the United States as a dominant leader in AI worldwide.

Improve Individuals' Health Journeys through Access to Information, Protecting Privacy, and the Collection, Sharing, and Use of Social Determinants of Health

Improving individuals' access to information, protecting privacy, and fostering the collection, sharing and use of social determinants of health are critical to improving health outcomes and transforming healthcare.

Improve Individuals' Access to Information

Improving individuals' access to and use of their health information is essential to engaging in decisions about their health and managing their care, reducing healthcare costs, and leading to better outcomes. Despite technological advances and enforcement of federal regulations[3] that support timely and electronic access to their health information, individuals continue to struggle with accessing their health information.

Protect Individuals' Privacy

While the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) governs health privacy in traditional healthcare settings, an increasing number of consumer-facing technologies and tools are not required to adhere to HIPAA because they are not considered covered entities or business associates.

As a result, individuals using these technologies are not always afforded the same level of protections as under HIPAA, such as required notices of privacy practices, security standards, restrictions on the sale, use, and reuse of protected health information by third

Where AHIMA Stands

Support individuals' electronic and timely access to their health information regardless of where it is captured, stored, or exchanged to help them manage their care and lead to better outcomes.

Where AHIMA Stands

Address privacy and security gaps of consumer-facing tools and technologies that collect, access, use, disclose, and maintain electronic health information.

[2] Available at: https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Americas-AI-Action-Plan.pdf
[3] Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, 21st Century Cures Act of 2016.

parties, and the individual right of access. Limited consumer education about the risks associated with such technologies has compounded these challenges. Recent legislative proposals have sought to address these gaps through a national privacy law.

Improving the Collection, Sharing and Use of Social Determinants of Health

Addressing **social determinants of health** (SDOH) is critical to improving health outcomes. Healthcare delivery and financing models that incentivize the collection, sharing, and use of SDOH data offer an opportunity to address health-related factors upstream from the clinical encounter that leads to such benefits as improved outcomes, better care, and reduced hospital readmissions. However, the collection, sharing, and use of SDOH data remains an operational challenge.

Advance Healthcare Transformation

Evolving consumer expectations, advances in technology, and shifts in payment and care models that rely on high-quality data are driving transformation in healthcare today. To support healthcare transformation, public policy can pursue better information flows to advance improved payment and delivery models and drive efficiencies in healthcare.

Pursue Better Information Flows

Healthcare decisions require information to be shared across settings and actors without unnecessary roadblocks and in ways that leverage standards that support real-world needs and maintain the confidentiality, privacy, and security of individuals' health information. Better information flows can be achieved through improved convergence and automation of clinical and administrative data and enhanced information sharing.

Improving the convergence and automation of clinical and administrative data could bring significant benefits to the patient experience and decrease administrative burden. In 2024, providers electronically submitted almost 4.5 billion claims, amounting to over 12 million claims per day.[4] However, exchanging clinical data to support administrative processes often involves manual work, including phone calls, extensive staffing, use of payer portals, and

Where AHIMA Stands

Advocate for accurate and consistent collection, sharing, and use of social determinants of health data to improve health outcomes.

Where AHIMA Stands

Influence efforts to better integrate clinical and administrative data to improve the patient experience, ease administrative burden, and reduce healthcare costs.

Champion a healthcare ecosystem that fosters information sharing to enable all healthcare stakeholders, including patients, to make more informed care decisions.

[4] Available at: https://www.caqh.org/insights/caqh-index-report

faxes. Automating such processes, including prior authorization, could alleviate administrative burden while reducing delays patients face in accessing treatment. Policy proposals to address these issues must consider the real-world experiences of end-users to ensure they build from the results of real-world testing and implementation pathways for a range of provider settings.

Improving information sharing could yield considerable benefits including reducing administrative burden, fostering faster clinical decision-making, improving patient safety, and reducing healthcare costs. The US Congress sought to improve information sharing in the bipartisan 21st Century Cures Act of 2016 by enabling the secure exchange of electronic health information without special effort and penalizing instances of information blocking by providers, health IT developers, health information exchanges, and health information networks. The Cures Act also called for the establishment of the Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement (TEFCA) to enhance nationwide data exchange. At the same time, misalignment between federal and state regulatory requirements and limited technical solutions to support data segmentation of sensitive patient data at a granular level creates burdens for stakeholders, including patients, that are incongruous with the expectation to share data across stakeholders. The absence of strong security measures compounds these challenges.

Improve Payment and Delivery Models

Shifts in **payment and care delivery models**, including increased use of telehealth and AI have contributed to advancing healthcare transformation. Participation in value-based care models presents an opportunity to reap the benefits that tie reimbursement to performance while containing healthcare costs. Value-based care models also create opportunities to deliver more personalized care to individuals and communities. These models rely on accurate health information to assess and prioritize high-value care.

Where AHIMA Stands

Champion payment and delivery models that leverage accurate, timely, and complete health information and technology in new and innovative ways.

Transforming health and healthcare will not happen overnight. Nor will it occur without high-quality, accurate, usable, and complete data. Engaging in public policy and advocacy in Washington, DC is an opportunity for health information professionals to share their knowledge and expertise about how health information can empower individuals and communities to impact health.

Please visit AHIMA.org to get involved and learn more about the AHIMA 2026 Advocacy Agenda.

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