



2023

Advocacy Impact Report

Every year, the American Health Information Management Association® (AHIMA®) Policy and Government Affairs team works to advance the AHIMA vision of transforming health and healthcare by connecting people, systems, and ideas. Despite the continued challenges facing healthcare in 2023, AHIMA advocacy efforts created meaningful legislative and regulatory changes for the health information (HI) profession and the patients we serve. Learn more about the accomplishments below.

#AHIMAadvocates

Strengthening Grassroots Engagement

Grassroots engagement by AHIMA members is critical to advancing the AHIMA Advocacy Agenda. Using a new grassroots points system launched this year, 16,229 weighted grassroots actions were completed, by members participating in policy work groups, engaging with our advocacy training modules, attending the AHIMA Advocacy Summit, meeting with congressional offices, and sending letters to members of Congress.

AHIMA Advocacy Summit

In March 2023, the annual AHIMA Advocacy Summit was back [in-person](#) in Washington, DC for the first time since 2020. Over the two-day Summit, attendees heard from federal policymakers and experts about ongoing public policy efforts that impact the HI profession. AHIMA members also met with members of Congress to advocate on issues that impact the profession. AHIMA members representing 40 states and Puerto Rico, held 169 meetings with members of Congress and congressional staff during the Summit. AHIMA visits influenced 12 members of Congress to support legislative asks that AHIMA endorsed.



AHIMA as a Policy Thought Leader

In 2023, AHIMA engaged as a thought leader in healthcare with the US Congress and Biden-Harris Administration to advance our priorities. This included [outreach](#) to congressional leadership highlighting the importance of issues such as patient matching and social determinants of health, and meetings with key leaders in Congress, as well as leadership at the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC), the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the US Department of Health and Human

Services (HHS) Office for Civil Rights (OCR), the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), the CMS Office of Minority Health (OMH), the National Committee on Vital Health Statistics (NCVHS), the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), International Trade Administration (ITA), US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA), and the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

In addition, the AHIMA Policy & Government Affairs team was quoted in a variety of trade and policy publications this year on topics ranging from privacy, [cybersecurity and ransomware](#), COVID-19 and ICD-10, as well as workforce and artificial intelligence. Such publications included: [Morning Consult](#), [Renal & Urology News](#), [Axios](#), [AFP Fact Check](#), Becker's Hospital Review, and HIT Consultant.

AHIMA embraced three key areas in its policy work in 2023: (1) improving the patient health journey through access to information, privacy, and equity, (2) ensuring the quality and integrity of health information, and (3) advancing healthcare transformation.

Improving the Patient Journey through Access to Information, Privacy, and Equity

Improving Patient Access to Information

- ✓ Submitted [comments](#) on the SAMHSA/OCR proposed rule on aligning 42 CFR Part 2 and HIPAA.

Protecting Patient Privacy

- ✓ Created a [fact sheet](#) and submitted [comments](#) on the OCR Reproductive Health Data Privacy proposed rule.
- ✓ Created a [fact sheet](#) and submitted [comments](#) on the FTC Health Breach Notification Rule proposed rule.
- ✓ [Responded](#) to a Request for Information (RFI) from the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee on solutions to safeguarding health data privacy.

Advancing Health Equity

- ✓ Released a [consensus statement on Data to Support Health Equity as one of the leaders of the Health IT End Users Alliance](#).
- ✓ Released a study and [white paper](#) in collaboration with NORC at the University of Chicago regarding the opportunities and challenges with collecting, integrating, and using SDOH data. These findings were presented at several external multi-stakeholder meetings including this at the [Gravity](#) Project Affinity Group meeting. The AHIMA-NORC study was [mentioned](#) by the American Medical Association in their CPT Assistant Bulletin.
- ✓ Moderated a panel on SDOH at the 11th [Global Digital Health Partnership \(GDHP\) Summit](#).
- ✓ Submitted [comments](#) on the Addressing Social Needs (ASN) Electronic Clinical Quality Measure (eCQM) Specifications.

Ensuring the Quality and Integrity of Health Information

Accurate, Timely, and Complete Information

- ✔ Submitted [comments](#) on proposed ICD-10-CM and ICD-10-PCS code modifications being considered for October 2023, April 2024, and October 2024 implementation.
- ✔ Submitted [comments](#) on proposed changes to Inpatient Prospective Payment System (IPPS).
- ✔ AHIMA staff was appointed to the NCVHS [ICD-11 Workgroup](#).
- ✔ Provided [comments](#) to CMS regarding the CY 2024 Outpatient Prospective Payment System (OPPS) proposed rule.
- ✔ Created a [fact sheet](#) and provided [comments](#) on the FY 2024 IPPS proposed rule.
- ✔ Provided [comments](#) on the CY 2024 Physician Fee Schedule proposed rule.

Patient Identification and Matching

- ✔ With the [Patient ID Now coalition](#), led letters to the US House Appropriations Committee and US Senate Appropriations Committee from 152 organizations urging repeal of Section 510 in the FY24 Labor-HHS-Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Bills.
- ✔ Through the Patient ID Now coalition, led letters to the US [House Appropriations Committee](#) and US [Senate Appropriations Committee](#) from 45 organizations requesting that \$7 million of the funding appropriated to ONC in FY24 be used for patient matching efforts.
- ✔ Congressional efforts around patient matching led to the FY24 Labor-HHS appropriations bill report language in the US House of Representatives including \$5 million of ONC funding dedicated to addressing patient matching.
- ✔ In conjunction with the Patient ID Now coalition, AHIMA hosted Patient ID Week, which resulted in more than 1000 actions, including emails, social media posts, and members sharing their stories.
- ✔ Garnered 12 US Representatives' signatures on a Dear Colleague letter requesting Section 510 be removed from the FY23 Labor-HHS appropriations bill.

Strengthening the Health Information Workforce

- ✔ Released survey and [white paper](#) in collaboration with NORC at the University of Chicago on the role of emerging technologies on workforce challenges in the health information profession.
- ✔ Hosted "The State of the Health Information Workforce and Artificial Intelligence" [webinar](#).
- ✔ [Responded](#) to a Request for Information (RFI) from the US Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee on a framework for the future of artificial intelligence (AI).

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Ensuring the Quality and Integrity of Health Information

Strengthening the Health Information Workforce

- ✔ Developed a [fact sheet](#) on the [Executive Order on Safe, Secure, and Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence](#).
- ✔ AHIMA [responded](#) to a Request for Information (RFI) from the US Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee on the drivers of healthcare workforce shortages and potential solutions.
- ✔ Joined the [Tomorrow's Workforce Coalition](#).
- ✔ Signed onto the Tomorrow's Workforce Coalition [letter](#) endorsing and supporting [S. 722 / H.R. 1477](#), the Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow's Workforce Act.
- ✔ Promoted an email campaign for [S. 722 / H.R. 1477](#), the Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow's Workforce Act, which resulted in over 1400 letters to Congress in support of the issue.

Advancing Healthcare Transformation

Pursuing Better Information Flows

Better Integrating Clinical and Administrative Data

- ✔ Promoted a campaign to urge members of Congress to sign onto US House and US Senate letters urging HHS and CMS to finalize the proposed electronic prior authorization rule that closely aligns with the Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act, resulting in bipartisan [letters](#) from the US House and US Senate, signed by 233 Representatives and 61 Senators.
- ✔ Submitted [comments](#) on CMS Administrative Simplification: Adoption of Standards for Health Care Attachment Transactions and Electronic Signatures, and Modification to Referral Certification and Authorization Transaction Standard proposed rule.
- ✔ Submitted [comments](#) on CMS Advancing Interoperability and Improving Prior Authorization Processes proposed rule.

Improving Interoperability

- ✔ Participated in The Sequoia Project's [Information Blocking Compliance Work Groups](#) related to electronic health information (EHI).
- ✔ Named [The Sequoia Project's 2023 Member of the Year](#).
- ✔ Invited to the ONC Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement (TEFCA) Application Acceptance event at HHS, as well as the TEFCA launch event recognizing the first set of approved QHINs.
- ✔ Joined [151 healthcare organizations](#) requesting \$500 million in funding for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).
- ✔ Created a [fact sheet](#) and submitted [comments](#) on ONC's Health Data, Technology, and Interoperability (HTI-1) proposed rule.

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Ensuring the Quality and Integrity of Health Information

Improving Interoperability

- ✓ Developed a [training series](#) on EHI to prepare members and stakeholders for information blocking compliance.
- ✓ Developed a [fact sheet](#) on the OIG Information Blocking Investigations and Enforcement Final Rule.
- ✓ Created a [fact sheet](#) and submitted [comments](#) on the HHS Establishment of Disincentives for Health Care Providers That Have Committed Information Blocking proposed rule.
- ✓ Led, in conjunction with HIMSS and CHIME, a sign-on [letter](#) calling for additional funding for ONC at \$103.6 million in 2023, garnering 57 organizational signers.

Public Health Information Needs

- ✓ Joined [90 organizations](#) in advocating for funding for the Data Modernization Initiative (DMI) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2024 to improve information sharing and allow state and local public health systems to keep pace with evolving technologies.
- ✓ Supported [S. 1995](#), the Public Health Infrastructure Saves Lives Act with an email campaign resulting in over 400 letters to Congress in support of the issue.

Improved Payment and Delivery Models

Telehealth

- ✓ Joined other organizations in sending a [letter](#) to Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI) and Representative Mike Thompson (D-CA) with legislative recommendations for health IT improvements in long-term post-acute care (LTPAC) settings to improve telehealth expansions called for in the CONNECT for Health Act.

Transforming health and healthcare will not happen overnight. However, AHIMA and its members stand committed to working with our federal policymakers to improving health and healthcare through the creation, collection, exchange, and use of trusted health data to attain the highest level of individual and community health. The AHIMA Policy & Government Affairs team thanks all of our advocates and volunteers for their continued support and commitment to AHIMA policy activities in Washington, DC.



For more information or for questions, please email advocacy@ahima.org

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