

House of Delegates Toolkit



Welcome!

Greetings, AHIMA Delegate:

Congratulations on your recent election or appointment to the AHIMA House of Delegates (HoD; House). Founded in 1946, you are a part of a long-standing, decision-making body of our professional association. As a delegate, you have an important role in guiding and governing the health information management (HIM) profession and are assuming a critical role for AHIMA and your Component State Association (CSA).

Almost a decade ago, the HoD started conducting business both online and face-to-face to meet the demands of a fast-paced healthcare industry. Delegates dialogue, deliberate and act for the betterment of the membership and the profession at an accelerated pace. The most important responsibility of delegates is to develop, discuss, and/or vote on important issues for professional growth, development and viability of the HIM profession. This document will explore the process for HoD governance and the importance of CSA membership communication.

We encourage you to review this toolkit as it provides important information that will orient you to the HoD and help ensure your success in serving as a delegate. You will find helpful reference documents, a position description, a list of terms and definitions and an overview of the House of Delegates and more.

We wish you great success in your role and we thank you for your time and commitment to the HIM profession. Please let us know if we can be of any further assistance to you and your CSA. We look forward to working with you this year!

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn Guyton-Ringbloom".

Carolyn Guyton-Ringbloom
Senior Director, Volunteer Leadership Development
carolyn.guyton-ringbloom@ahima.org

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna Desai".

Anna Desai
Manager, Profession Governance
anna.desai@ahima.org

Overview of House of Delegates

History

In 2007, the House of Delegates implemented a structure comprised of six standing house teams representing individual facets of health information management. This structure allowed for more tactical work, engagement, and valuable contributions. Team charges were set by the AHIMA Board of Directors and accomplished over time.

During the 2011 annual HoD business meeting, delegates revised the bylaws and experienced a new way of thinking and working. Facilitated by Glenn Tecker from Tecker International LLC, delegates discussed, collaborated, and recommended action on 11 mega issues facing our profession. The work on the mega issues is being accomplished through a variety of groups. At Winter Team Talks, Susan Parker, 2012 Speaker of the House, presented a new, forward-thinking approach to the operations and configuration of the House of Delegates, also referred to as the *Governing the Profession Initiative*.

Today

Based on input and comments received at the 2012 Leadership Symposium, there was consensus to move forward with the proposed structure. The new approach will position the House of Delegates to move more agilely to address the issues facing our profession today, tomorrow, and in the future. The operational framework will allow the HoD to make the best use of time and effort.

Below are descriptions of House Leadership, Envisioning Collaborative, and task forces that help bring more clarity to the HoD structure.

House Leadership

House Leadership includes all 52 CSAs providing oversight to the designated task forces. Similar to task forces, the house leadership will divide and conquer specific initiatives with respect to the House of Delegates. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, planning the annual meeting, developing procedural guidelines, and monitoring performance measures.

The Envisioning Collaborative

The Envisioning Collaborative serves as a “think tank” comprised of delegates, subject matter experts, and industry leaders bringing forward emerging issues and trends that can impact our profession. In this environment, there needs to be a robust exchange of perspectives, innovation, and ideas that will enable us to make sound decisions to help generate strategic solutions advancing the profession.

Task Forces

The formation of task forces will create a member focused objective linked to AHIMA strategy that includes a defined set of issues. This will allow for more flexibility and agility in the completion of projects. Members may volunteer for task forces that best fit their interests, expertise, and time commitment.

Toolkit Purpose

The Delegate Toolkit is a resource to provide easy access to the most current and relevant information a delegate will need to prepare for his/her role as a delegate. This toolkit has been created to help delegates/alternates/members understand the delegate role and provide the resources delegates need to prepare and carry out that role.

Making the Decision to Become a Delegate

Delegates are elected or appointed by respective state members and serve as a vital communication and membership link between AHIMA and its members. A delegate represents his/her Component State Association (CSA) in the House of Delegates (HoD) and related activities, informs the CSAs and members of timelines, and expresses the desires of the members through voice and vote in the HoD.

These leaders help keep our profession strong and moving forward by contributing or recommending action on issues affecting the industry and ensuring the voice of the member is heard.

It is suggested that a potential delegate read the entire toolkit and all relevant documents linked to this toolkit, in order to make a knowledge-based decision to commit to the time and work necessary to fill this important role.

All delegates must complete the online [Conflicts and Dualities of Interest and Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement Form](#) before volunteering. It is important that you understand you will be responsible for evaluating situations in which you may find yourself representing multiple interests.

Delegate Position Description

Volunteer Core Competencies

AHIMA has identified core competencies for all volunteers, including delegates. All volunteer leaders are encouraged to complete the [Volunteer Leadership Competencies Self-Assessment](#). It is a useful tool for professional development and when considering volunteering for leadership positions.

Qualifications *(at a minimum)*

- Active member of AHIMA and CSA
- Knowledgeable and experienced HIM professional
- Demonstrates leadership and promotes advocacy
- Accessible to communicate via phone or email
- Available and active when needed

Desired Attributes

- Understanding of AHIMA, the profession, and the industry
- Possesses critical and strategic thinking skills
- Communicates with and engages members
- Presents a professional image and has high ethical standards

The role of delegate is to govern the HIM profession. This is done by performing the following activities:

- Advocates for the profession, the members, and the Association
- Communicates, seeks feedback and informs the membership on AHIMA and HoD activities
- As outlined in the Bylaws:
 - ✓ Approves the standards governing the profession
- Vets professional practice content
- Conducts environmental scanning
- Serves as a communication and membership link between AHIMA and its members
- Contributes or recommends action on issues affecting the HIM profession
- Facilitates for the voice of the member
- Votes on important matters pertaining to the House of Delegates
- Provides input on gaps in AHIMA programs and services and areas of HIM research and innovation
- Participates in meetings:
 - ✓ CSA and/or local meetings and Board meetings
 - ✓ March Leadership & Advocacy Symposium
 - ✓ July Leadership Symposium
 - ✓ Annual House of Delegates Meeting

Delegate Role and Responsibility

Delegates work virtually, year-round, advocating for the profession, the members, and the Association. With a special focus on governing the profession, role activities will consist of participating in debate and discussion, conducting environmental scanning, advocating for the profession, and vetting professional practice content.

A delegate is responsible for attending and participating in meetings virtually and in-person at the Annual HoD meeting prior to the AHIMA Convention & Exhibit. A delegate is also responsible for casting informed votes and ensuring his/her CSA is processing recommendations according to policy.

Role of the AHIMA Board of Directors in the House of Delegates

Members of the AHIMA Board of Directors participate in the AHIMA House of Delegates as delegates. The Board's primary responsibility is governing the association with fiduciary oversight for AHIMA. The Board is not representing his/her home CSA when serving in the HoD as a Board member. He or she, is elected by the AHIMA membership, and is acting on behalf of the entire AHIMA membership whereas the HoD is acting on behalf on their CSA members. The Board's participation is important in ensuring the HoD, as a unit with AHIMA, is working in a coordinated effort with the association and in alignment with the AHIMA strategy.

Role of the Alternate Delegate

Members of the AHIMA House of Delegates serve as the primary link between AHIMA and its members. The delegate is a key source of information on activities, programs, and policies of AHIMA. Therefore, when the delegate is unable to fulfill his/her responsibilities, an alternate delegate should assume those responsibilities in the delegate's absence. The qualifications and responsibilities of the alternate delegate are the same as identified for the delegate.

Delegate's Timeline

Year-Round Activities

Update your AHIMA profile

It is critical that AHIMA has your most up-to-date contact information. In order to communicate with you, please verify we have your preferred e-mail address on file, to ensure you do not miss out on any important meeting or activity information throughout the year. [Click here](#) to update or verify your current e-mail address and other Profile information.

Become a member of the [State Leaders and House Community](#)

While the Engage platform is still being tweaked, be sure to stay up-to-date on HoD information on the State Leaders and House Community. This community is the key tool for discussion and collaboration, networking with fellow colleagues, and sharing of information, resources, and events. For those delegates who are unfamiliar with the CoP, [click here](#) for introductory resources and videos. For a one-on-one training experience, please e-mail [JoAnn Coleman](#), Manager, Volunteer Leadership Development.

Training

There are many training and professional development opportunities that you have access to as a delegate. As an added bonus, many of these provide continuing education credits. Some of the key training opportunities are Leadership Symposium (July), Delegate Training Webinar (August), Leadership and Advocacy Symposium (March), annual House of Delegates meeting (September/October). Please be sure to watch the [State Leaders and House of Delegates Community](#) for exact dates and more information about these events.

Future Leadership at AHIMA

As you progress in your role as a delegate, be sure to consider serving in future leadership roles with AHIMA or locally within your own CSA. You can complete the online [Application to Serve](#) and learn more about AHIMA's elected and appointed leadership roles at [AHIMA](#).

For more information about leadership development, please visit [Careers in HIM/Leadership Development](#).

July/August

Delegates will receive an email, from AHIMA staff, welcoming them and providing important links to where they can locate the delegate toolkit and other information pertinent to their role

Leadership Symposium

Delegates are invited to attend the annual Leadership Symposium in Chicago. The two-day interactive meeting includes presentations and discussions focused on a variety of topics such as leadership, governance, and environmental scanning; providing take-aways for CSAs to further engage their members. The cost to attend this event is free.

Nominating Committee and Speaker-elect Ballot

Applications for 2014 appointed positions are due August 1; the selection process will begin in the fall. The 2013 AHIMA Nominating Committee recently met in Chicago and prepared the ballot for 2014 association leadership and CCHIIM commissioner positions. Voting for these positions begins September 3 and ends September 23, with election results expected in early October. Once voting opens, active AHIMA members can visit ivote.ahima.org and enter their AHIMA ID number and password to log in to the ballot. Student members are not eligible to vote. A full list of candidate bios will be included in the September issue of the *Journal of AHIMA*.

Reporting of Delegates

CSA Central Office Coordinators or CSA leaders will provide the names of their delegates to AHIMA staff, including a representative for House Leadership and one for Envisioning Collaborative. All CSAs whom have not reported their delegates will be contacted by AHIMA for follow-up.

Delegate Training Webinar

Incoming delegates are encouraged to attend the Delegate Training webinar scheduled in early August. The webinar will better prepare you for the roles, responsibilities, expectations and resources as a CSA delegate.

Subject Matter Expertise Data Collection Form

Delegates will be asked to complete a SME form. The data collected will be used for when we form task forces, subgroups within Practice Councils and other volunteer groups. It is important for you to complete this form. Your expertise and interests will help us connect you with volunteer opportunities for specific HIM issues.

September/October

Delegates will be required to stay up-to-date on HoD meetings and events through the [House of Delegates webpage](#) and Engage. The HoD website is your key source to be fully updated with information and resources that will keep you and your CSAs informed throughout the year.

House of Delegates Meeting

The HoD meets annually in-person prior to the AHIMA Convention & Exhibit. Delegates will receive an email with a tentative schedule of events, proposed agendas and other information pertinent to the HoD business meeting. Delegates will have the opportunity to check-in and pick up meeting materials the evening before the meeting.

November/December

Environmental Scanning

Delegates will have the opportunity to provide input to the bi-annual Environmental Scan report. This report is developed by the Envisioning Collaborative and is distributed to the Board of Directors in preparation for the January Strategic Planning session. Your ideas and comments help shape the strategy and direction of the HIM profession. Delegates will be sent a survey to help contribute to this report.

January/February

Apportionment Report

The apportionment data is available for CSAs to review. The report will be located on the new Engage platform.

Register EARLY for the Leadership and Advocacy Symposium and Hill Day

Delegates are welcomed to attend both events in Washington, D.C. This is a two-day event with presentations and discussions focused on leadership and the importance of advocating to Congress on behalf of the HIM profession. The cost for the two events are free.

March/April

Leadership and Advocacy Symposium and Hill Day

Delegates are welcomed to attend both events in Washington, D.C. This is a two-day event with presentations and discussions focused on leadership and the importance of advocating to Congress on behalf of the HIM profession.

May/June

Nominations for Co-chairs

Delegates will be informed for the call for (self) nominations for co-chairs of the Envisioning Collaborative and House Leadership teams for the next delegate term. Co-chairs will be appointed by the Speaker-elect to serve in their respective roles for a one-year term.

Environmental Scanning

Delegates will have the opportunity to once again, provide input to the bi-annual Environmental Scan report. This report is developed by the Envisioning Collaborative and is distributed to all delegates online and at Leadership Symposium in Chicago. Delegates will be sent a survey to help contribute to this report.

Reporting of Delegates

To get a head start on the next delegate term, CSA Central Office Coordinators and CSA leaders can begin providing the names of their delegates for the next term as early as May to AHIMA staff. The email should contain a list of their delegates, including a representative for House Leadership and one for Envisioning Collaborative. All CSAs whom have not reported their delegates will be contacted by AHIMA for follow-up in late July.

Nominations for Co-chairs

Delegates will be informed for the call for (self) nominations for co-chairs of the Envisioning Collaborative and House Leadership teams for the next delegate term. Co-chairs will be appointed by the Speaker-elect to serve in their respective roles for a one-year term.

Meeting Schedule

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Month</i>
New Delegate Orientation webinar	August
Envisioning Collaborative	September
Annual HoD Meeting	October
House Leadership	November
Envisioning Collaborative	December
House Leadership	January
All Delegate webinar	February
Leadership and Advocacy Symposium (Washington, DC)	March
House Leadership	April
Envisioning Collaborative	May
All Delegate webinar	June

Resources

The Reading List includes key resources for you to review. After you have reviewed each item, place a check in the “Read” column. If you are unable to access a document, contact Volunteer.Services@ahima.org for assistance. For some links to work correctly, you need to [login](#) to the State Leaders and House of Delegates Community (SLHOD Community).

For general information about the House of Delegates, including upcoming events and activities, please visit the HoD website at <http://www.ahima.org/about/hod.aspx>.

Document Name	Overview	Read
AHIMA Bylaws	Copy of AHIMA’s Bylaws	
AHIMA Code of Ethics	Helpful review of the principles and guidelines of the Code of Ethics by which members and credentialed HIM professionals must abide. This document describes our professional responsibility, noting what behaviors are “ethical.”	
AHIMA Publications <i>AHIMA E-alerts</i> <i>AHIMA Advantage</i> Journal of AHIMA <i>AHIMA Resources</i>	<p>As a member of AHIMA, you receive publications both electronically and in print. Take a moment to verify your AHIMA Profile is current so you receive these publications in a timely manner and at your preferred location.</p> <p>As a delegate, it is important you stay current with what’s happening in the industry. These AHIMA publications will help you stay current and keep an eye on the big picture as you consider AHIMA business.</p>	
<i>I-Lead</i> Newsletter	<p>Newsletter for CSA leaders and delegates that provides timely updates on the latest and anticipated activity in the SLHOD Community.</p> <p>Note: Link will take you to the Community Login page. After logging in, you will be directed to the topic.</p>	
House of Delegates Policies and Procedures	<p>Defines the objectives, election of delegates, delegate certification, preparation of delegates and voting process of the House of Delegates.</p> <p>Note: Link will take you to the Community Login page. After logging in, you will be directed to the topic.</p>	
Proposed Bylaw Amendment Form	Guides the formatting of any proposed bylaw changes into three sections: the current bylaw; the proposed amendment; and the rationale behind the proposal.	
House of Delegates	Provides information about CSA apportionment and	

<p>Apportionment Report</p>	<p>information for new delegates. An updated reported is issued to CSAs in approximately late January/early February of each year.</p> <p>Note: Link will take you to the Community Login page. After logging in, you will be directed to the topic.</p>	
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Engage

Engage will replace the current [Communities of Practice](#) and will be the online community for the House of Delegates and CSA Leaders. Engage will be the place where you can find the following information: meeting announcements, information about action items and voting, training, discussion amongst delegates, CSA leaders and members, etc. There is a wealth of information here. Be sure to take some time to build your profile and explore the site once Engage is fully implemented. For more information on Engage, please email engage@ahima.org.

Accessing CSA Resources

As you review this toolkit, keep in mind that your CSA may have additional resources, policies and procedures or training materials to help you understand your role. It's likely your CSA has specific expectations of you – you will want to find out about these early. Consider partnering with an experienced delegate in your CSA or someone who has recently served in the role of a delegate. A “delegate buddy” can be very helpful.

CSAs Supporting Delegates

CSAs need to support delegates in their important role. CSA members should be aware of issues and take the responsibility to provide input and feedback to their delegates on issues. As well, CSAs need to ensure delegates fully understand their role. CSAs should have policies, procedures and a position description available to delegates. Providing new delegates a sample process for obtaining member input can help ensure delegates have the tools to be successful. Some CSAs may actively use Engage while others make best use of e-blasts or a Web site, and still others prefer the face-to-face meeting format. It is helpful for new delegates to understand what process works best so she/he can easily obtain member input.

While CSAs need to support delegates, delegates have a responsibility to fulfill expectations and carry out required duties. A key role of the delegate is to communicate with members on important issues. This includes educating members on issues and engaging in thoughtful dialogue on both sides of an issue.

Glossary of Terms

Below is a list of commonly used terms and their definitions along with common acronyms. Take a moment and become familiar with each term and acronym.

- **AHIMA** – American Health Information Management Association
- **Action Item** – Item that requires a vote by the House of Delegates. Examples of action items include the annual Nominating Committee election, motions, amendments to the AHIMA Bylaws, or motions to adopt resolutions.
- **Apportionment** – Distribution of delegates per component state association. Apportionment for all CSAs is calculated annually by AHIMA staff in accordance with the AHIMA Bylaws. The annual calculation of apportionment may result in a slight change in the size of the House of Delegates each year.
- **Component State Association (CSA)** – The AHIMA federation is made up of 52 CSAs – including the 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.
- **CSA Survey** – Electronic survey completed annually from approximately April – June by each CSA. It collects information and statistics about each CSA. The information is used for reporting and benchmarking purposes.
- **Delegate** – Individuals elected by a CSA or appointed by a CSA Board of Directors to serve in the AHIMA House of Delegates, a grassroots member forum, to advance the health information management profession. The directors serving on the AHIMA Board of Directors are delegates in the House of Delegates and represent all members of AHIMA in their actions.
- **Delegate Term** – Delegates typically serve in the House of Delegates for two years, but this varies by CSA. Delegates can locate their specific term length by contacting their CSA leaders or looking in their CSA bylaws or policies and procedures.
- **Engage** - Refers to AHIMA's NEW, online collaboration and networking tool. It is the official community for CSA leaders and the House of Delegates. All delegates will need to join this when Engage is fully implemented. Engage will replace the Communities of Practice (CoP).
- **Environmental Scan** – Process to collect input from CSAs and subject matter experts on trends, priorities or other emerging factors that are influencing or have the potential to significantly impact the health information management profession.
- **Envisioning Collaborative** - The Envisioning Collaborative will serve as a “think tank” comprised of delegates, subject matter experts, and industry leaders bringing forward a robust exchange of perspectives, innovation, and ideas that will enable us to make sound decisions toward strategic solutions that advance the profession.

- House of Delegates (HoD; House) – A grassroots member forum to advance the health information management profession. The purpose of the House of Delegates is to conduct the official business of AHIMA, with specific powers and duties outlined in the AHIMA Bylaws. The HoD conducts business on a virtual, year-round basis with an annual business meeting being held in conjunction with the Annual Convention and Exhibits (typically late September/early October). Information about the House of Delegates is on the AHIMA Web site at <http://www.ahima.org/about/hod.aspx>.
- House of Delegates Calendar – The House of Delegates operates on a July 1 – June 30 calendar. Approximately 50% of the House membership turns over each year. The AHIMA Board of Directors follow a January 1 – December 31 calendar.
- House Leadership – House Leadership, consisting of 52 CSA delegates, will serve as a steering committee. They will provide oversight to the designated task forces and carry some of the same responsibilities as the former House Operations House Team. Similar to task forces, the leadership team will divide and conquer specific initiatives such as operations and direction, task force development, and project management and follow-up.
- Performance Measure – A statement of how success in achieving an objective will be measured and tracked. They are written in a statement of what will be tracked and trended over time – not the actual target. Indicators of work performed and the results achieved in an activity, process or organizational unit. Performance measures are both financial and nonfinancial and enable periodic comparisons and benchmarking.
- Strategy – Plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.
- Strategic Plan – Defining direction and making decisions on allocating resources to pursue the strategy.

For information about the House of Delegates, please visit our website at AHIMA [House of Delegates](#).

For questions, please contact AHIMA at profession.governance@ahima.org