2014-2017

STRATEGIC PLAN

DRIVING THE POWER OF KNOWLEDGE
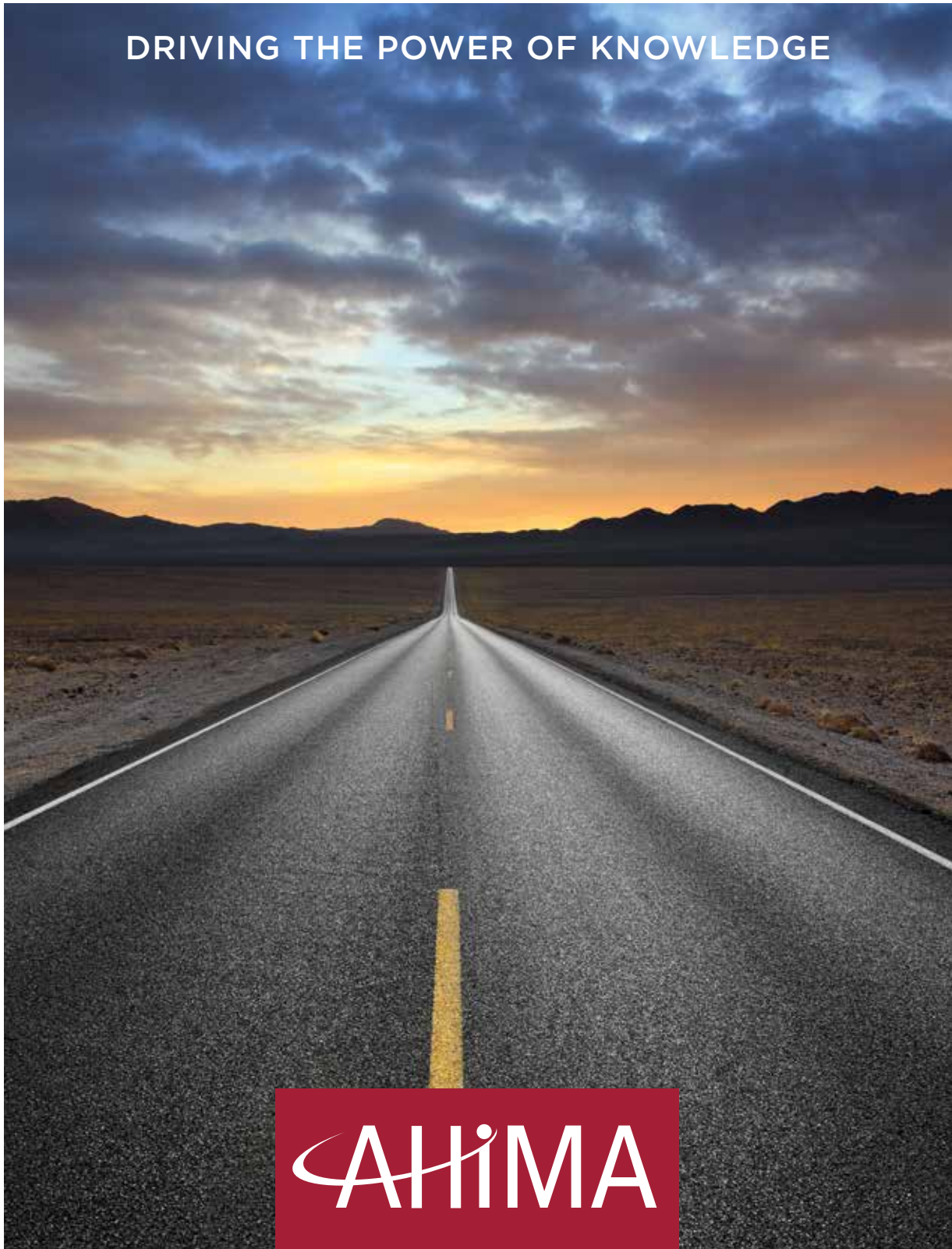
AHIMA

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Executive Summary

With the advent of new technologies and increasing legislation and regulation, the focus in healthcare is shifting from the ability to collect data to the ability to govern and use it effectively. Needs are evolving from simply translating data to having instant access to intelligence that can drive clinical and administrative decision making in real time. Accurate and timely health information will be the greatest asset to drive successful healthcare organizations in the next 5 to 10 years, making data integrity and information governance necessary core competencies of industry leadership and creating a great need for health information management (HIM) professionals who are armed with the skills and tools to manage information effectively.

Today's HIM professionals are often perceived as being focused on tasks rather than strategy. As health intelligence grows, the professional community needs to recruit the best and the brightest and provide innovative solutions that create and leverage health intelligence.

AHIMA will continue to serve as a lighthouse for those professionals by offering sage advice and wisdom to guide healthcare providers and users with new expertise, and by advocating for the responsible use of data in healthcare and recognition of the profession trained in its maintenance. To accomplish this, AHIMA has developed five goals to guide the Association and the HIM profession over the next three to five years:

With this strategic plan, AHIMA reasserts its belief in the necessity of building quality healthcare through quality information. In this modern healthcare delivery system, HIM professionals will become recognized leaders whose work is imperative to clinical and administrative decision making by healthcare leaders. Supported by AHIMA, the health information profession will lead the industry in achieving data integrity through information governance, and ensuring patients and consumers have access to timely information they can trust.

Acknowledgments

AHIMA would first like to thank the AHIMA Board of Directors, together with the AHIMA House of Delegates and Envisioning Collaborative for setting a vivid vision for where the Association and the HIM industry should strive to go in the next several years. Through participation in focus groups, brainstorming and feedback sessions, and the strategic planning process, these groups have represented AHIMA's members, customers, and partners and all healthcare consumers to pave the way toward the future of HIM. Previous work, including Vision 2016, AHIMA's Core Model, the Health Information Career Map, and many other documents, was referenced in the creation of this plan to ensure continuity and to build on those efforts.

AHIMA would also like to thank its staff, the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management (CAHIIM), and AHIMA's formal affiliates, which include the Commission on Certification for Health Informatics and Information Management (CCHIIM), the AHIMA Foundation, and the Foundation's Council for Excellence in Education (CEE), for their willingness to partner in this important effort and, when appropriate, to align their strategic initiatives with those of the Association. It is only through collaboration that the goals in this plan can be achieved.

AHIMA would also like to acknowledge Glenn Tecker and Tecker International, LLC, for introducing the Association to its process for planning strategically as well as for facilitating many of the sessions leading up to this plan. AHIMA has many other partners and advisors who have helped along the journey and are not taken for granted.

Finally, AHIMA acknowledges its members, component state associations (CSAs), practice councils, and all HIM professionals who will be instrumental in supporting the achievement of this plan.

AHIMA could not be the strong organization it is today without the dedication of its volunteer base and industry allies. It will continue to provide advocacy, tools, education, and resources to empower HIM professionals to become the healthcare leaders of the future.

"It is only through collaboration that the goals in this plan can be achieved."

Introduction

With the advent of new technologies over the last several decades, the world now has the ability to collect more data than ever before. In the United States, this transition has accelerated in healthcare by reform efforts that reward installation of new systems and meaningful use of the information that can be gleaned from them. Accurate and timely data will drive successful healthcare organizations in the next 5 to 10 years, making information governance and data integrity critical components of a successful healthcare organization. The leadership and skills required to manage the information assets of healthcare organizations will be essential competencies for industry leaders.

The challenge of the past was to collect data from disparate systems and sources throughout the world. Today, however, the challenge has transitioned to parsing the information so that it can be used intelligently. In healthcare, while data are being defined, collected, and analyzed to create information, these actions are completed without consistent operating rules between facilities, practices, or professionals.

In the future, healthcare leaders will translate collected information into knowledge and well-informed decision making. Discovery of trends and solutions in health institutions will occur as much by the management and application of information as by biomedical research. Needs are evolving from simply translating data to making accurate and timely decisions with the right information given at the right time to the right person with the right resources (otherwise known as health informatics). This evolution will create a great need for a decentralized team of professionals trained in HIM, who have the skills to audit, analyze, and create intelligence from the noise of instant data collection. HIM professionals will support patient safety and quality initiatives, patient access, and improved operations, leading to greater trust and transparency within organizations and healthcare in general.

AHIMA's Body of Knowledge will continue to be its most valuable asset, and the aggregate intellectual capital of AHIMA's members and contributors will continue to be its primary resource. To ensure all professionals who use health information are armed with the necessary skills and tools to manage it effectively, AHIMA must become a content-centric enterprise with a broader reach. Educators and academic partners teaching the AHIMA domains will play a vital role in advancing the profession and moving it to greater levels of knowledge and recognition. AHIMA's development and transfer of knowledge and its advocacy efforts will continue to be organized to effectively support the knowledge needs of health information professionals, so they can do so for the healthcare system.

HIM professionals are often perceived as being focused on tasks rather than strategy. As health intelligence grows, the professional community must recruit the best and the brightest and provide innovative solutions that leverage that intelligence. They will do this by providing tools and resources to upgrade the learning experience and leadership of current and incoming professionals in the field. Effective advocacy, through traditional and new vehicles, will be required to create awareness of the higher-level skills and the value that these professionals bring to the healthcare system. This effort requires a reallocation of attention, time, and dollars to activities that expand and sustain the Body of Knowledge and the ability of health professionals to use it.

With this strategic plan, AHIMA—building on its existing tangible and intangible assets—commits itself to leading and preparing the health information profession so that HIM professionals become recognized leaders in the modern healthcare delivery system. The work of these professionals is essential for clinical and administrative decision making by healthcare leaders, and for an informed consumer base, leading to a healthy society.

AHIMA's Core Purpose

These aspects of AHIMA's culture serve to drive the organization and act as a filter for opportunities and engagements, ensuring activities remain dedicated to AHIMA's core purpose and the expectations of member and profession.

Mission: AHIMA leads the health informatics and information management community to advance professional practice and standards.

Vision: AHIMA...leading the advancement and ethical use of quality health information to promote health and wellness worldwide.

QUALITY

INTEGRITY

LEADERSHIP

RESPECT

CORE VALUES

QUALITY
Demonstrated by adding commitment to innovation, relevance, and value in programs, products, and services.

LEADERSHIP
Demonstrated by visionary thinking, decision-making responsive to membership and mission, and accountability for action and outcomes.

RESPECT
Demonstrated by appreciation of the value of differing perspectives, enjoyable experiences, courteous interactions, and celebration of achievements that advance our common goal.

INTEGRITY
Demonstrated by openness in decision-making, honesty in communication and activity, and ethical practices that earn trust and support collabortation.

Environmental Scan

Each year, AHIMA draws on its members, industry partners, and other healthcare leaders to compile an analysis of HIM issues and trends expected to affect the future of healthcare. The scan uses the work done by the AHIMA House of Delegates and Envisioning Collaborative as a basis, then adds and adjusts based on feedback gathered from other sources throughout the year. Data are organized in five key categories essential to the HIM environment as well as an "other" category to capture emerging opportunities and relevant issues that do not fall under the five domains. The scan will be reviewed and updated each year during the annual review of AHIMA's strategic plan and will inform the objectives and tactics needed to uphold the Association's desired direction.

Business/Economic Climate Trends

This category represents economic forces shaping both the Association's opportunities and member needs relative to the Association and the value it offers. Top trends reported in this group include:

■ **Budget Constraints**
Organizational expenses continue to rise while budgets decrease, with cost containment efforts creating staffing and workforce challenges. The HIM department is not typically viewed as a revenue-producing department and is often not awarded budgetary funds for areas such as privacy, compliance, and other initiatives influencing HIM. Departments proposing projects must provide a return on investment (ROI) and justify spending.

■ **Data Integrity**
Data integrity has quickly become the highest priority for hospital healthcare leaders and stakeholders. HIM professionals are accountable to ensure quality data for patient safety, statistical and analytical reporting, and reimbursement uses. It is increasingly challenging to monitor and manage the integrity of data due to volume, variety, and velocity of data sources, both internal and external to organizations.

■ **Efficiency Requirements**
Budget constraints and reimbursement changes are forcing many organizations to find efficiencies through technology, consolidation, or staffing adjustments. Reductions in personnel now require staff to be more agile, bringing in more skills and flexibility to meet changing needs and risking inconsistencies in knowledge transfer. In addition, keeping staff engaged and motivated is challenging when resources are cut but workloads continue to increase.

■ **Reimbursement Changes**
There will be increased pressure on the timeliness and accuracy of coding and billing as the focus on quality data, documentation, and quality of care reporting drive reimbursement. These changes affect the bottom line, making it even more difficult for organizations and departments to forecast and budget necessary services, projects, and activities.

■ **Unfunded Mandates**
Increased regulatory requirements demand an investment of resources to implement and affect hospital departments' processes and work flow. Government officials are requiring audits without providing additional funds to help defray the cost of preparing for visits by various auditing bodies.

Demographic Trends

This category represents the population of AHIMA's members and prospective members, and how their environments, views, and requirements will change in the coming years. Top trends in this group include:

■ **Aging Membership/Population/Workforce**

The aging workforce will have an impact on supply and demand of HIM professionals. It is estimated that approximately 6,000 new HIM workers are needed each year to fill new positions and replace those who retire or leave the field. While older members are retiring, the profession has been slow to replace and prepare younger members and early careerists to fill their vacant spots. Engaging the younger generation and mid-careerists will require using new avenues of communication as well as providing information in ways that support instant gratification.

■ **Globalization—Access to Information**

Technology has created an unavoidable global economy, providing easy access to digital information without regard to where a person may be located. People around the world are gaining more education and exposure to new ideas and information, creating communities with others who share similar interests or expertise. Businesses can collaborate virtually without regard to location or even time zones. To support globalization, information must be managed in new ways, including better consolidation of data and meta-tagging for searchability, and communities must be fostered virtually to attract new members and expertise.

■ **Population Health Management**

Information can now be made more widely available, and be applied for a broader range of uses, than ever before. Government agencies are capitalizing on this availability to identify trends in the occurrence, prevalence, and management of health conditions. Quality and accuracy of health information will make it easier to measure changes in population health over time.

■ **Waning Volunteerism**

Decreased budgets and unwillingness of employers to accommodate continuing education time and expenses make it challenging for members to become involved and fully participate in professional development and volunteer activities. Without member engagement, it will become more difficult to manage member expectations and leverage expertise.

■ **Moving Offshore**

Outsourcing and offshoring have arisen in response to the healthcare industry's need to perform services more economically. Seasoned professionals cost money, and these methods can help control costs but may lead to less perceived necessity for HIM as a profession. However, relying on individuals without the same training may have an impact on patient safety and even drive up costs if coding and reimbursement best practices are not consistently followed.

■ **Employer and Patient Empowerment**

As the decision makers for health insurance practices in the American workforce, employers are increasingly requiring providers to add more value at the same cost. This trend includes setting up bundled payment agreements with large systems and requiring more coordination and documentation of care. Patients, too, are becoming increasingly aware of available data on patient safety, satisfaction, or other rankings, leading to greater choice than ever before.

Legislation/Regulation Trends

This category includes trends in legislation and regulation that may directly affect the Association or the attitudes of the members toward the Association and the value it offers. Top trends include:

- **Accountable Care Organization (ACO) Changes**
  ACOs are being developed more widely than ever, requiring new methods for information exchange and creating the need for quality data to ensure effective and coordinated patient care. While many unknowns remain, ACO changes and implementation are a high priority for HIM in 2014 and beyond as we learn how data will be managed, shared, and protected by ACOs.

- **Big Data**
  Managing the upcoming torrent of data from hospitals and other care settings, clinical trials, and health information exchanges will place a heavy burden on the HIM profession. As big data is becoming a higher priority of both government and businesses, HIM professionals play an integral role in determining whether their organizations can embrace big data and use it in an effective and meaningful way.

- **Longitudinal Coordination of Care**
  Focus is increasingly being placed on long-term and post-acute care settings to improve outcomes while decreasing hospital readmissions. Longitudinal coordination of care has become a vital strategy as reimbursement methodologies change. Value-based purchasing, bundling of payments, and ACOs are prime examples of the changing payment landscape and are driving the need for effective sharing of information across the care continuum.

- **E-Discovery**
  Advances in technology and new regulations (such as the HITECH Act) make it difficult to follow traditional paper-based methods governing legal discovery. E-discovery brings many more complexities and requires new precedents to be set, and will become a high priority for HIM as more states adopt e-discovery rules and regulations governing the uses and disclosures of electronic records data.

- **Healthcare Reform**
  Healthcare reform will boost the need for highly trained and continually educated HIM professionals in the near future. Not only will HIM managers be required to commit to the newest technology for safe record keeping, they will also be required to continue the traditional practices of budgeting, evaluating employees, and implementing policies mandated by the federal government. Another change will be the tying of reimbursement to quality-of-care requirements. Payments to hospitals will be partly based on readmission rates and patient satisfaction scores as well as other data-driven outcome measures. This change will require the monitoring and reporting of quality—an opportunity for new HIM leadership roles.

- **Private Payers**
  Although the Affordable Care Act directly affected only Medicare and Medicaid by tying payments to quality, private payers are quickly following suit. This trend has accelerated a shift in incentives from the previous volume-driven methods to an emphasis on the value that is created and the ability of providers to keep patients healthy and out of acute care settings. The risk ends up on hospitals to absorb the cost of patients who are frequently admitted. Payers will begin to drive consumers toward the providers that they perceive create the most "value."

Political/Social Value Trends

This category reflects social and cultural issues affecting the Association's opportunities and shaping members' desire for, and attitudes toward, the value offered by the Association. Top trends include:

■ Need for Actively Involved/Engaged Members

Human capital, including educated members who bring diverse and specialized experiences to elevate and advocate for the profession, is always in great demand. Engaged members lend a voice to change and help to set the example within their own environments. AHIMA must continue to engage and develop its membership base and become more inclusive of new groups and expertise in order to support its major initiatives.

■ Attracting New Professionals

Growing demands of the profession are opening doors to diverse job opportunities. However, studies indicate a lack of qualified individuals to fill these new roles. The HIM profession risks losing credentialed positions to those without credentials and to other professions if training opportunities do not exist to help students and members adequately prepare for emerging roles.

■ Low Component State Association (CSA) Member Participation

Today's busy work environment makes it challenging for members to volunteer and participate in professional development activities. Some CSAs have had to rotate their leadership to keep their positions filled. However, to remain competitive in today's job market, the networking and quality educational opportunities associations provide are more relevant than ever.

■ Competition with Other Healthcare Professionals

HIM professionals are competing with other professions such as information technology (IT) and nursing for similar positions in leadership, quality, compliance, and information privacy and security. The lines between HIM and IT in healthcare are becoming more blurred with advances in healthcare technology. While organizations now favor moving toward a multidisciplinary approach over traditional silos to accomplish work, there are challenges and opportunities ahead for HIM to be part of the conversation and remain as subject matter experts in health information.

■ Repurposing Jobs

The shift from paper to electronic records has created a dramatic change in jobs and duties. Additionally, employers are learning how to do more with less, causing some positions to be reevaluated and redesigned. Today's workforce requires individuals to become agile and continuously review current competencies, identify gaps and opportunities, and be open to developing more advanced skill sets to remain relevant and competitive.

■ Decision Support

Just because more information is available does not mean it is properly used. Executives and managers are increasingly being asked to justify decisions and priorities to make the best use of limited resources. This requirement creates a need for clinical and nonclinical decision support systems, such as pricing, risk/return, predictive modeling, and trend analysis, causing executives to rely on the expertise of HIM professionals to ensure they have all the information needed in a usable format. HIM professionals need to be part of data strategy to help design systems to support these needs.

Technology/Science Trends

This category reflects how new developments in science and technology help to collect, store, share, and manage information. Top trends include:

- **Communication**

  Social media and portable devices like smartphones and tablets (with downloadable apps) have the ability to revolutionize the HIM profession in ways we have yet to fully realize. More opportunities to communicate using a variety of different methods and tools will help members and consumers seek advice and gain knowledge.

- **Computer-Assisted Coding (CAC)**

  Computer-assisted coding will dramatically change the way medical records are reviewed and coded, and will greatly affect professionals with a CCA or CCS credential who primarily code. This new technology will open opportunities for HIM professionals to be involved with assessing, planning, and implementing CAC technology to improve efficiency and effectiveness. In the long run, those professionals will then have the ability to transition to roles of greater responsibility, including auditing, maintaining, and developing systems to create intelligence from quality data.

- **Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Understanding (NLU)**

  NLP and NLU technologies built into EHRs are helping to improve functionality by enabling effective use of dictation and voice recognition, as well as the capture and use of data in CAC programs. They will increasingly be used to pull together disparate parts of the EHR to create the full patient story. These advances will allow HIM professionals and caregivers to spend less time entering information and more time analyzing it to create even greater value for organizations.

- **Health Information Exchange (HIE)**

  The establishment of HIE in the United States is revolutionizing how information is exchanged and delivered, but the real question in the coming years will be how to actually exchange the information, rather than defining what an exchange is. ACOs and patient care will be enhanced and accelerated through interoperability, but there must be significant controls on privacy and security. It is crucial to ensure that data exchanged are complete, accurate, and timely.

- **Privacy and Security**

  The industry faces continuous and increasing challenges as laws, rules, and regulations governing privacy and security of health information become more sophisticated and complex. HIM professionals must ensure systems are secure, patient privacy is always protected, and the HIM profession remains at the forefront of these changes. As accessibility and security become the top priorities, privacy may be assumed, but HIM professionals will be the ones behind the scenes making sure that is the case.

- **Mobility**

  Mobile access will provide new challenges and opportunities and require trained HIM professionals to take the lead. Access will not be limited to health data systems but also available to patients through their personal health records (PHRs) and possibly through applications. Consumer education is required so that patients know how to access their information and have confidence that it can be trusted and used by professionals in any location.

Other Key Trends

Emerging trends not covered above include:

■ **Certification of Professionals**

Certification adds value for an employer and provides benefits for individuals. However, many students are not taking the certification exams, even with incentives for early testing. In addition, facilities with staffing shortages or budget constraints are not requiring candidates for some HIM roles to have a certification. The lack of certification presents challenges to promoting the credibility of and advocating for the profession.

■ **Difficulty for Students to Obtain Jobs Post-Graduation**

Entry-level credentials are not always aligned with present and current needs in the healthcare industry. Students are having difficulty obtaining employment without experience, leading many to become discouraged and leave the profession altogether. Without training opportunities such as professional practice experience (PPE) and available entry-level positions, students are unable to gain the training needed to have a successful start to their HIM careers.

■ **Lack of Trained HIM Professionals**

While educational programs continue to address the key competencies and skills required for successful employment, HIM departments with limited resources and time are less likely to offer internships and training opportunities to students and early careerists. Rural areas have the added challenge of a lack of available HIM programs. Employers in these areas often do not require certified professionals for HIM roles or are unable to compensate fairly for these positions.

■ **Educational Criteria**

More healthcare professionals are mandating that schools increase the requirements of their educational curriculums, and are boosting their own knowledge requirements for new roles. Given the increasing complexity and demands of today's healthcare environment, advanced and specialized education will help improve our profession's prominence and enable HIM professionals to pursue advanced positions in their organizations.

■ **Increased Research**

Evidence-based research is increasing rapidly in provider settings, boosting credibility, recognition, and respect for the HIM profession. Providing focused opportunities for research will advance the role of HIM professionals in informing clinical practice, helping organizations transition to the EHR, and developing operating rules to improve data quality, informatics, and information exchange

AHIMA's Envisioned Future

Drive the Power of Knowledge—Health Information Where and When It's Needed

This long-term goal reflects AHIMA's continued focus on its vision of advancing the ethical use of quality health information to promote health and wellness worldwide. As big data and interoperability create both challenges and opportunities, AHIMA and the HIM profession are positioned to take leadership roles in consumer education and data analytics, and create health intelligence that can be used to lower costs and improve patient care.

The healthcare industry will continue to change rapidly over the next 10 years. To accomplish these goals for the future, AHIMA and the profession must convene collaborative groups and accomplish three major initiatives:

1. Take the lead in driving information governance and defining standards for electronic health information. The healthcare industry will recognize HIM professionals as the experts in data and health information governance, with superior skills in providing consistent management, guidance, policies, and processes to ensure accurate, accessible health information and improved longitudinal coordination of care. This expertise includes the legal and proper uses of health data, collection and completion of records, auditing, and releasing information as appropriate. To accomplish this, AHIMA must increase recognition among healthcare leadership that HIM professionals possess the necessary capabilities and skills to take ultimate responsibility for health information.

2. Contribute to sound healthcare decision making through analytics, informatics, and decision support. Healthcare organizations will depend on HIM professionals as leaders across all healthcare sectors with expertise in predictive modeling of clinical information, trend analysis, and revenue cycle management. To accomplish this, providers will also need to accept the role AHIMA members play in extending the use of data in clinical treatment and for secondary purposes, such as population health, quality reporting, and e-discovery. HIM professionals must be competent in creating clinical analytics and business intelligence processes that advance improvements in the quality of care and organizational performance. AHIMA will develop these HIM leaders across all healthcare sectors, and they will be recognized as innovative forces in the healthcare industry.

3. Empower consumers to optimize their health through management of their personal health information. This initiative includes advocating or advancing progress toward the day when all consumers can securely transport their health information with them, no matter where they may travel in the world, ensuring timely access to their own information, where and when it's needed. AHIMA will rely on key industry allies and strong advocacy to assist with the technical and implementation components of making portability possible, and on allies overseas to share best practices in information governance.

The HIM profession cannot accomplish these efforts on its own. Collaboration will be required from IT professionals, executives, governments, and many others worldwide, and AHIMA will need to inspire this action through relationship building, innovation, and leadership. The following goals define how AHIMA will work toward this envisioned future over the next three to five years.

AHIMA's Goals: The Next Three to Five Years

I. Informatics: Transform Data into Health Intelligence

The focus in healthcare is shifting from the ability to collect data to the ability to govern and use it effectively. Needs are evolving from simply translating data to providing instant access to intelligence that can drive clinical and administrative decision making in real time. Healthcare organizations will depend on HIM professionals as leaders across all healthcare sectors, with expertise in predictive modeling of clinical information, trend analysis, and revenue cycle management.

HIM professionals will need to be competent in creating clinical analytics and business intelligence processes that grant stakeholders better value through improved longitudinal coordination and quality of care.

AHIMA will support these HIM leaders in the following ways over the next three to five years:

1. Define health intelligence for the healthcare industry and other key stakeholders

2. Provide education, training, and other resources to ensure HIM professionals have the skills and tools needed to perform as leaders in informatics and health intelligence

3. Promote the value of credentialed experts to healthcare leadership to increase the number of HIM professionals in analytical and decision making roles

4. Partner with industry allies including other associations, employers, universities, government agencies, and consumer groups to increase the use of health data in professional practice, create standards for interoperability, and advocate for their consistent application across the healthcare domain

5. Advocate for the appropriate and informed use of data in clinical treatment and for secondary purposes, such as population health, quality reporting, and e-discovery, to further realize the potential of health information technology

6. Recruit HIM researchers to utilize generated data and intelligence to move toward real-time research that supports improved patient safety and quality of care

7. Broaden expertise in terminology and classification systems to support future needs and alternatives

8. Document and share best practices in the management, analysis, and application of semistructured and unstructured data to ensure the compilation and use of the patient's full story

When successful, AHIMA and the HIM profession will have convened the creation of a health learning system in which a vast array of healthcare data can be appropriately aggregated, analyzed, and leveraged using real-time algorithms and functions.

II. Leadership: Develop HIM Leaders across All Healthcare Sectors

HIM professionals are often perceived as being focused on tasks rather than strategy. To move the industry forward, HIM directors must recruit the best and the brightest and develop their current workforce to provide innovative solutions for capturing, processing, and creating intelligence based on health data. They must proactively offer their knowledge and decision support expertise as they become more integrated into organizational leadership, with AHIMA providing support and training to allow them to feel confident in doing so.

As electronic health systems are adopted, HIM professionals will be major assets to implementation teams and will have a great ability to learn and share best practices with others in the field.

AHIMA will support these HIM leaders in the following ways over the next three to five years:

1. Provide relevant education, training, and other resources to allow HIM professionals to be confident in their ability to take responsibility for their areas of expertise, in collaboration with other professionals, and to feel comfortable acting as leaders within healthcare from any seat

2. Through Reality 2016 (see Appendix B), create pathways for HIM professionals to be recognized for leadership skills, including expanding higher education and advanced certification options and aligning curriculum to meet current and future needs

3. Build the AHIMA Body of Knowledge to include expertise that will attract leaders from complementary fields to AHIMA and support their needs, including C-level professionals, physicians, and others

4. Increase the awareness of industry leaders of the breadth and depth of knowledge that HIM professionals bring to the table

5. Remain on the cutting edge of topics in health information and maintain a long-term vision to allow agility and a proactive approach to healthcare issues

6. Partner with universities, government agencies, employers, educators, and recruiters on local, state, and national levels to boost workforce recognition of HIM leadership skills

When successful, AHIMA and the HIM profession will have made education more accessible and relevant in all healthcare sectors, which will then invite the best and brightest to provide leadership across the enterprise and promote sound decision making practices. A need for decision support systems will prompt executives to rely on the expertise of HIM professionals to ensure that they have all the information needed in a usable format.

III. Information Governance: Be Recognized as the Healthcare Industry Experts in Information Governance

Effective enterprise information management in healthcare requires governance at both the data and information levels to improve healthcare. The need for this governance in healthcare is being driven by the rapid rate of adoption of health information technology, the demand for health information to measure quality and performance outcomes in healthcare delivery, and the need for the use of clinical and financial data.

If the following areas are not addressed, organizations may be unable to achieve the full benefits:

1. The accountability framework and decision rights required to ensure effective use of health information across the enterprise

2. The defined processes, skills, and tools to manage information as a critical business asset throughout its life cycle

3. Essential standards, rules, and guidelines for functioning in an increasingly electronic environment AHIMA is uniquely positioned to lead collaborative efforts to address these needs.

AHIMA will support the healthcare industry and HIM professionals in establishing information governance frameworks and processes in the following ways over the next three to five years:

1. Engage industry stakeholders to collaborate with AHIMA on the accountability framework along with processes and practices needed for appropriate information governance in healthcare

2. Lead collaboration of stakeholders in the development of standards and rules for electronic healthcare documentation and interoperability approaches

3. Participate in domestic and global standards bodies for HIM and health information technology (HIT)

4. Serve on regulatory and healthcare industry committees focused on proper uses of health information

5. Be recognized within and outside the healthcare industry as the "gold standard" for principles, models, and best practices for information governance for healthcare

6. Broaden expertise in e-discovery and litigation support and reinforce record management principles to ensure that governance frameworks and mechanisms support compliance with increasingly complex business processes

When successful, AHIMA and the HIM profession will be the key industry resources for closing the gap on needed standards to ensure the integrity of quality health information as the industry continues to migrate toward an increasingly electronic environment. They will also enable effective and secure sharing of information, give domestic and global healthcare leadership ready access to real-time decision support information, and help ensure full benefit realization and return on investment for EHR solutions.

Society will also benefit from the exchange and use of health information that is accurate, accessible, and secure, and that provides the right information to the right person at the right time. Consumers will be engaged and empowered to access their personal health information, providing it to their caregivers when needed.

IV. Innovation: Increase Thought Leadership and Evidence-based HIM Research

Evidence-based research is rapidly increasing in provider settings as more and more data become available. Providing focused opportunities for research will advance the role of HIM in informing clinical practice and developing standards to improve data quality, informatics, and information exchange, and help organizations transition to the EHR. It will also position HIM experts on the forefront of healthcare strategy, using data-driven outcomes to predict trends and support decision making. The use of data creates great value for organizations and for society and allows a proactive approach to individual and population health.

AHIMA will support HIM innovation in the following ways over the next three to five years:

1. Support the AHIMA Foundation and its Council for Excellence in Education (CEE) in creating a graduate research alliance to focus efforts on data-driven outcomes research in higher education, as part of Reality 2016

2. Partner with the AHIMA Foundation to create a health information research institute

3. Increase creation of thought leadership opportunities by convening leaders throughout the profession to envision and implement the future of HIM

4. Continue to grow and support the Health Information Innovation Leadership Conference to provide support for HIM professionals to be thought leaders in their own environment

5. Provide exceptional communities of practice to allow HIM professionals and the general public to share ideas and collaborate on an ongoing basis

When successful, HIM professionals will be recognized as innovators in information governance, integrity, and analytics, and results will be demonstrable through data integrity metrics, improved quality of care, organizational performance, and proven returns on investments in HIT innovations. AHIMA and its members will create new processes for business and health intelligence and provide rapid learning opportunities to support clinicians and allied health providers.

V. Public Good: Empower Consumers to Optimize Their Health through Management of Their Personal Health Information

Consumers of healthcare have historically had limited access to their health record. EHRs and other technologies are slowly making it possible, for the first time, for patients to view or even amend their health record when not in the hospital. However, the United States is far from widespread adoption of personal health records (PHRs) or patient portals.

HIM professionals will empower all consumers to securely transport their health information with them, no matter where they may travel in the world, providing timely access to any healthcare provider when needed.

AHIMA will empower healthcare consumers in the following ways over the next three to five years:

1. Partner with industry allies to create functional HIM/HIT standards for interoperability and to advocate for their consistent application

2. Build consumer and industry awareness of patient rights and technological capabilities

3. Decrease consumer barriers to accessing health information

4. Contribute to globalization of health data and the needs of developing countries

5. Inspire confidence and trust in the accuracy and security of health information to the point where it is naturally assumed

When AHIMA achieves these aims, providers and provider systems will accept the role AHIMA members play in extending the use of data in clinical treatment and for secondary purposes, such as population health, quality reporting, and e-discovery. Consumers will be empowered to access, carry, and update their health information without existing barriers such as geography or competencies.

Appendices

Appendix A: AHIMA's Process for Planning Strategically

Under the advisement of Tecker International, LLC, AHIMA has worked to create a process for planning strategically, allowing for long-term planning with the ability to adjust quickly as the environment changes.

Previous work on AHIMA's Core Model, the Health Information Career Map, and many other documents was referenced in the creation of this plan to ensure continuity and build on efforts already underway.

AHIMA has realigned the timing of its strategy session so that it develops a strategy a year in advance. This timing has several benefits, including the fact that the Association's budget and operational goals can be set once the strategy is already in place, and the Association can create a communication plan so that all stakeholders can remain informed and provide feedback on a continuous basis. At the strategy session, key stakeholders review the environmental scan, core ideology, and three- to five-year goals to ensure the proper direction for the Association and profession to follow.

To remain agile, the AHIMA Board of Directors considers adjustments to AHIMA's strategy through the use of Mega Issues, which set up background and alternatives for major decisions that must be made for the profession. AHIMA staff, members, and outside experts conduct research to ensure that the decisions made are well informed.

Throughout the year, AHIMA continues to solicit and compile feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders to ensure it remains relevant in a changing environment and provides the leadership the industry requires.

Feedback is incorporated into the next strategic planning session, if not acted upon immediately, to expand on the House of Delegates' environmental scan.

Appendix B: Reality 2016

Reality 2016 is AHIMA's proposed plan for the future of HIM education and the broader profession, developed by AHIMA and the AHIMA Foundation's Council for Excellence in Education (CEE). Four major initiatives are being developed by the CEE to move the profession forward:

- Increasing the number of HIM professionals who hold graduate degrees: A core theme often repeated by AHIMA during this discussion is "Learn More, Earn More." Data suggest that having a master's degree may result in better job opportunities and higher salaries. Given the increasing complexity and demands of HIM jobs, graduate education is a great way to improve HIM's professional stature. For HIM professionals pursuing advanced positions in either their own organization or other organizations, a graduate degree may facilitate this advancement. Having a greater number of HIM professionals in senior leadership positions allows those who best understand the profession to have greater influence on its expertise in delivering quality care. A variety of educational options are planned to encourage HIM professionals to obtain graduate degrees. As always, AHIMA will continue to support associate and baccalaureate education programs and the RHIA and RHIT credentials.

- Associate degree specialty tracks: The CEE also recommends enhancing the associate degree to include areas of specialization, such as coding, health data analytics, management, e-HIM®, physician practice, and registry management. The current two-year associate program will remain as the core education requirement before a candidate takes the RHIT examination. However, the ability to take one or more specialty tracks as add-ons allows more options for post-associate specialization.

- Faculty and member development: Investing in faculty and member development to boost skills in statistics and research methodology, data integrity, and information governance is another area under consideration. These are skills all HIM professionals need in a competitive job market, and they will especially help HIM faculty teach these subjects to their students and assist AHIMA members in standing out for advancement. Support for this educational initiative will be provided through a variety of programs such as a dissertation grant process and a research boot camp.

- Increasing the workforce with additional qualified professionals: AHIMA is currently exploring two options, (1) creating a proposed postgraduate certificate model for doctoral and master's-level individuals to obtain an RHIA credential, and (2) expanding opportunities for those who hold the RHIA credential to obtain master's and doctoral degrees. The ultimate objectives are to increase the number of professionals who can lead HIM education in academic institutions and continue to prepare students for the future as well as to increase the presence of HIM professionals in executive or C-suite jobs.

More information on Reality 2016 was published in the August 2012 *Journal of AHIMA* under the following citation:

Calhoun, Mona, Bill Rudman, and Valerie Watzlaf. "Vision 2016 to Reality 2016: Building a Profession."

Journal of AHIMA 83, no. 8 (August 2012): 18–23.