



July 22, 2009

Dear State Legislator:

As the federal government closes in on meaningful healthcare reform, one important issue will undoubtedly rise to the top end of your state's legislative agenda; and that issue is workforce. Specifically, how will your state develop a well-educated, properly trained workforce large enough and diverse enough to meet the broad demands of the electronic health information management and technology positions required to operate our reformed healthcare system?

Even as the White House and Congress grind toward passage of the reform legislation that promises to summon the dawn of electronic health information as the standard for reimbursement, research, public health, quality assurance, privacy, security, expanded coverage and controlled costs, there are not enough properly-trained and educated Americans to fill the employment demands this new age will create.

For this reason, the American Health Information Management Association is asking you to lead the passage of workforce legislation in your state that adds accredited health information management and health informatics bachelor's degree programs to the lineup of science majors already offered by your state-funded colleges and universities.

A very conservative estimate is that we will need at least 75,000 *more* health information management professionals over the next four years. That number multiplies greatly once you include the more technical professions (health information technologists) and extrapolate through end of the next decade (2019).

This is an urgent matter. Consider that it takes four years to generate an HIM or HIT bachelor degree graduating class. Even if *every* state college began offering accredited HIM programs this fall, it would be 2014 before we began to see real increases. HIM workforce expansion is a wonderful opportunity to begin healing the wounds inflicted on your state's employment rolls by the shards of our broken economy. These well-paying, professional jobs cannot be exported overseas or concentrated into a couple of geographic marketplaces.

AHIMA stands ready to support your legislative and academic program development efforts with support from our Division of Policy and Government Relations (Don Asmonga, 202-659-9440) and our Division of Education and Accreditation (Claire Dixon-Lee, 312-233-1183). We look forward to having an opportunity to serve your assembly and the proud people of your great state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Vera Rulon".

Vera Rulon, MS, RHIT, CCS
President
AHIMA