

# 2008 AHIMA Convention Wrap-Up

Save to myBoK

AHIMA held its 80th Convention and Exhibit October 11–16, 2008, in Seattle, WA. It was a time for members to share ideas, challenges, and solutions and hear about some of healthcare's hottest topics from industry experts. A full exhibit hall offered a collection of the latest in HIM products and services. There was even time left at the end of the day for socializing, catching up with colleagues, and networking.

AHIMA thanks all the members, WAHIMA, exhibitors, and corporate partners who made this year's convention such a success.

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## House Approves CHDA Certification

The AHIMA House of Delegates approved a motion to create a new credential in health data analytics during its Sunday session. The house also passed bylaws amendments on certification and a resolution on privacy and security.

The motion on the new credential was proposed by the Council on Certification (CoC) as a way to recognize and advance those professionals working in the growing field of data analytics, increase the size of an AHIMA-certified HIM work force, and further engage new members at a professional level. Eligibility requirements include a baccalaureate degree or higher and a minimum of five years' healthcare data experience or an RHIA credential and one year of healthcare data experience.

Exams for the Certified in Health Data Analytics (CHDA) designation will be available in December 2008. More information is available at [www.ahima.org/certification](http://www.ahima.org/certification).

## Bylaw Change, Privacy Resolution Also Pass

The amendments to the AHIMA bylaws allow the Council on Certification to pursue accreditation as a certifying body by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). Such accreditation will strengthen differentiation for AHIMA certifications in an increasingly crowded market. The bylaw changes explicitly transfer full authority over the elements of certification from the House of Delegates to the council, a requirement of both NCCA and ANSI.

In addition, the bylaw changes ensure the autonomy of the council by changing its composition. AHIMA will have the right to appoint up to 40 percent of the council, while the other 60 percent would be composed of individuals representing other stakeholder groups. The bylaw renames the council the Commission on Certification of Health Informatics and Information Management Professionals.

Finally, the House approved a resolution on privacy and security submitted by the Missouri Health Information Management Association. The resolution asks that AHIMA members call on healthcare organizations to educate users of health information about the need for improved and consistent information privacy and security; that HIM professionals be on the forefront of educating about auditing and monitoring access to health information; and that AHIMA endorse consistent healthcare policies and standards when a breach does occur. The resolution is available at [www.ahima.org](http://www.ahima.org).

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## I-10 Center Stage

ICD-10 was a hot topic inside meeting rooms and in the hallways outside them. AHIMA hosted a town hall meeting and three sessions updating attendees on the current status of the proposed rule for implementing the code set.

ICD-9 is failing, AHIMA director of coding policy and compliance Sue Bowman, RHIA, CCS, told attendees. By one estimate, it may run out of codes next year. The transition will be time-consuming, complex, and expensive, she said, but it is essential in supporting contemporary and future healthcare. She advised organizations to get started with the transition and not wait for a final rule.

In a press conference, AHIMA CEO Linda Kloss, RHIA, FAHIMA, told reporters that AHIMA believes that implementation is achievable in three years. Jill Dennis, senior vice president of advocacy and practice leadership, said the association will support the industry with an “effective, knowledgeable, cooperative process.”

AHIMA launched an ICD-10 survey at the convention asking participants about their expectations and preparations for the transition. Early results showed that ICD-10 task forces had been formed at 14 percent of organizations and were being discussed at another 33 percent.

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## CMS in Search of Value

Speakers at Tuesday’s general sessions examined the future of the industry from the local, state, and national level, with HIM and health IT at the center.

Kerry Weems, acting administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, described CMS’s vision for healthcare quality value-based purchasing (VBP). “We owe it to our beneficiaries, tax payers, and consumers to pay for better healthcare at lower cost,” he said.

Weems described some CMS initiatives that support VBP, including the recently published proposed rule for implementation of ICD-10. A move to ICD-10 would make more accurate payment possible, as well as more specificity and granularity in data reporting for today’s system needs, Weems said. Another initiative, the Recovery Audit Contractor (RAC) program, aims to make transparency and oversight a priority. As the RAC program spreads nationwide, “accurate coding will be an absolute priority,” Weems said.

Weems said that VBP’s goal is a system where the right care is provided to the right person every time—something, he said, that is “virtually impossible” in a paper-based world. To that end, CMS has launched initiatives to support the EHR and e-prescribing as efforts that can greatly reduce cost and medical errors. Similarly, personal health records “have the ability to be game-changers in health information technology,” Weems said. Finally, CMS is beefing up sites such as Nursing Home Compare, which will begin offering a rating system soon. “Bringing information into the sunlight will transform healthcare,” he said.

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## Getting Personal with Genetic Medicine

Advances in genetic testing and profiling may bring the advent of personalized medicine sooner than we think, according to industry experts at convention.

Alan Guttmacher, MD, acting director of the National Human Genome Research Institute, described “personalized medicine” as the use of information about an individual’s genetic makeup to personalize healthcare. While we’ve known for some time that genetic factors play a role in disease, we are at the start of an era where we can identify specific risk factors as well as treatments and lifestyle factors that may lower risk, Guttmacher said.

Increased knowledge of the human genome will advance personalized medicine in several ways, he said:

- Defining disorders by their underlying biological causes, rather than by symptoms
- Providing knowledge about individual personal genetic disease predisposition, leading to more personalized screenings, behavioral changes, and medical therapies
- Allowing the use of the right drug at the right time as well as developing new medicines

Wylie Burke, MD, PhD, professor and chair of the department of medical history and ethics at the University of Washington, offered perspectives on related ethics considerations and policy questions. Burke said that there is “extraordinary promise” for

improvement of healthcare based on genetic information, but she stressed the use of genetic information does carry risk.

For example, much information found via genetic testing is not highly predictive of increased risk of disease, Burke noted. In that case, it can be hard for people to know how best to use the information. Other risks include false positives, unwanted incidental findings, and unnecessary or unproven care.

To be most successful, genetic research requires large, representative populations of participants, adequate funding, and evaluation of the comparative effectiveness of genomic profiling, according to Burke. It will also be important for clinicians to engage in education with the public about what is and isn't known. And it will be important for clinicians to learn how to communicate moderate risk information in a meaningful way to patients, Burke said.

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## **Bids Fund Scholarships in Not-So-Silent Auction**

The Foundation of Research and Education's popular Not-So-Silent Auction was a hub of browsing and bidding between sessions. More than 125 donated items were on display.

The auction raised \$26,000, and FORE received an additional \$17,000 in donations. Proceeds benefit the foundation's annual scholarship program, which since 1991 has awarded more than \$773,600 to 644 students.

FORE thanks all those who bid on items at this year's convention. The foundation also thanks the state associations, individuals, the armed services, and corporate partners who generously donated items to the auction. FORE extends a special thank you to the WAHIMA volunteers who helped set up and staff the auction booth.

## **Students in Attendance**

Convention showcased some student research and offered job-seeking workshops and networking opportunities.

Winning posters in the first student poster competition, sponsored by the FORE Research Committee, were on display, and winners were on hand at the Research Networking Breakfast.

Students in all-day Student Academy learned job-search strategies and heard tips on resume building, interviewing, and writing strong personal statements.

Students also took advantage of one of convention's best networking events, the Career Center. The half-day event offered attendees an opportunity to meet with employers and recruiters and learn about career opportunities. Both new students and experienced professionals took advantage of the informal setting to talk with employer representatives, discuss skills and qualifications, and get one-on-one feedback.

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## **Read It All**

*AHIMA Today* is the official show daily of the convention. You can read all three issues in their entirety online. Go to [www.ahimatoday-digital.com](http://www.ahimatoday-digital.com). The digital issues will be available through April 2009.

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## **Webcasts Available**

Select sessions from convention are available for purchase as Webcasts. For more information, visit <https://imis.ahima.org/orders> and search on "Webcast." Sessions will be available through October 31, 2009.

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## **Save the Date**

Join AHIMA for the 81st Convention and Exhibit at the Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center, located in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. The convention will be held October 3–9, 2009, in Grapevine, TX.

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