

# 50 Ways to Enhance Your Career

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Whether you're new to the HIM profession or a seasoned expert, you may be looking for a new challenge, increased recognition, or a change of career. With that in mind, the *Journal of AHIMA* has compiled a list of tips for success that you can use on the job or as part of your personal career plan. We've also talked to some AHIMA members about their own career turning points.

## On the Job

Love it or hate it, we spend most of our waking hours at work. Here are some suggestions to help you be more effective at work and get the recognition you deserve.

- 1. Be an expert.** If you know your material, you can be the person people come to with questions. Do your homework and study regulations such as HIPAA and other guidelines. Understand the new PPS system. When something new is introduced, you can position yourself as the house expert.
- 2. Strive for accuracy.** Knowledge and skill are impressive. Combine them with accuracy and follow-through for a thoroughly professional impression.
- 3. Join a Community.** Visit AHIMA's Communities of Practice at [www.ahima.org](http://www.ahima.org) at least once a week. You can view up-to-date information, ask questions, see how other members solve problems, and gain valuable resources to enhance your job. You can also join a Community to learn about a less familiar area of HIM practice. Be sure to share your best tips and resources to help other members and the HIM profession, too.
- 4. Go beyond your job description.** Take on new projects when they are offered. If the project makes you stretch, even better. For example, offer to serve as TQM trainer or leader of a task force. Offer assistance to others; volunteer for a project no one else wants. Taking on something new can open doors, increase your knowledge, and introduce you to new people who could be helpful as your career advances. In doing so, you demonstrate you are able to work beyond your job description and may be ready for promotion.
- 5. Spread the word.** "Educate" the non-HIM members of your organization on your current job and how it "fits" the business objectives and needs of the organization. Demonstrate how HIM professionals add value to an organization.
- 6. Know yourself.** Pay attention to the aspects of your job that inspire you the most. Consider volunteering for projects related to your interest, taking a class to learn more about it, or finding a job that allows you to do it to a greater degree.
- 7. Specialize.** "Drill down" on a portion of your job and become the resident expert in your organization on it. This is a chance to educate and influence others as well as an opportunity for external speaking engagements and writing opportunities. This added visibility could lead to an internal promotion or a new job opportunity.
- 8. Keep an eye on Washington.** When new initiatives and regulations like HIPAA or compliance appear, do all the quick homework you can and send information to key administrative representatives and your boss. Give them a summary of the important points, as well as the source material itself in case they wish to read all the details. This positions you as an expert and places you in their sights for opportunities to expand your horizons.
- 9. Be proud of yourself and your profession.** Your self-confidence and enthusiasm about your profession will earn the respect of peers and make you an employee who stands out.
- 10. Proofread.** Take a minute to reread any memo, e-mail message, letter, or report. Putting your best professional foot forward in print says you are smart and thorough.

**11. Exhibit a can-do attitude.** Managers give new opportunities to people who are positive and willing to try new things. Conversely, they are unlikely to reward negative attitudes with new opportunities and challenges.

**12. Exemplify the best in customer service.** Remember who your customers are--patients, staff, volunteers, and other departments, to name a few. Be polite, helpful, courteous, and respectful. Try to exceed expectations. When you can't do something, let the customer know why not and then offer an alternative. Let them know what you can do and when you can complete it. If something's not going to be completed on schedule, communicate with the requestor.

**13. Remember those who've helped you.** Often, our successes are the direct result of several individuals or departments coming together to achieve a specific objective. Remember to recognize the individuals who contribute to your success. Give credit to your staff where credit is due. For coworkers and colleagues, a personal note or "thank you" is a gracious gesture.

**14. Keep your resume updated at all times.** Continually reposition yourself within the healthcare industry by window-shopping for job openings that would challenge you. Float your resume for positions that include areas of responsibility not previously held, but for which you feel you have transitional skills and qualities.

**15. Plan your next step.** Look at where you are now and where you want to be. For example, if you have been coding for many years, you may not have all the necessary skills, experience, or expertise to step into an administrative-level position. How can you get there? For instance, if your coding experience has been in a physician office and your employers now seek a clinic manager, look at the job requirements. In what areas are you well prepared, and in what areas do you still need improvement to be considered a candidate for the management-level position?

**16. Be on your toes in job interviews.** Be prepared to answer questions related to why you want a certain position, the strengths or weaknesses you might bring to a workplace, how you relate to other people, and other typical interview questions. If this is your first time seeking employment or if you are making a career change, try to provide practical examples that would show how you might succeed in the job you want. Also point out other skills, perhaps with certain software or equipment.

**17. Don't burn your bridges.** Keep relations positive as you leave one employer and move to another. You never know when your paths may cross in the future. When you discuss the reasons for moving on, objectively state the positives of what you gained as well as the challenges.

**18. Implement a new idea.** Incentive pay, telecommuting, and job sharing were all once "new ideas." You learn a lot by pushing your boundaries--about yourself and the people you work with. New ideas almost always produce more new ideas. If the one doesn't work, maybe another one will.

## Not Just Nine to Five

It's important to excel on the job, but the workplace isn't the only place where you can work toward career success. Perhaps you're working at home, making a transition to a new career, or have moved to a new city and are looking for a job. These tips can be implemented on or off the job.

**19. Surround yourself with successful people.** Learn from interacting and networking with top-notch professionals in the HIM and healthcare industry. What makes them successful? There's a lot to learn from their examples.

**20. Learn to deal with difficult people.** Relationship-building skills are extremely valuable in any industry and demonstrate your maturity, intelligence, and ability to solve problems.

**21. Exude energy and confidence.** Success comes to those who are energetic, open to change, and willing to volunteer. A confident person is beneficial to any organization or profession. These people will strive to gain the knowledge necessary to do the job, and because they are self-confident, others will develop confidence in them. Let the people you work with know how much you care about your organization and the people you work with. Demonstrate that caring in everything you do.

**22. Get your goals on paper.** Write down a list of one-, three-, and five-year goals. They should be progressive; one-year goals should assist in meeting the three- and five-year goals. Evaluate your list on an annual basis as things change. Share them with your boss, family, and others who can support you in attaining your goals.

**23. Be punctual.** Although people vary in how much they care about whether you're on time or not, no one will ever complain that you're always prompt.

**24. Choose a mentor wisely.** A mentor can be a person in your particular profession who has attained a position to which you might aspire. This person could help you understand the areas in which you need to focus in order to reach a desired professional goal. Or a mentor can also be a person who has a certain business outlook and professional savvy that you admire. The mentor should be a person who has "been there, done that" and can help you examine pros and cons of your career decisions. You may wish your mentor to give advice or be a sounding board, but above all the mentor should be someone whom you can emulate throughout your professional growth.

**25. Read.** Create time in your schedule to routinely read a variety of professional publications. Even "new" information is bound to come in handy sometime, maybe when you (and your boss) least expect it. Take advantage of HIM journals and newsletters as well as other trade journals in areas of healthcare in which you have an interest. If you're looking for more information about a specific area, consider purchasing a topic-specific textbook on managed care, home health, long-term care, etc.

**26. Make the Web a habit.** Bookmark some favorite Web sites focusing on strong areas of interest. Schedule yourself to periodically check the "what's new" section. You'll feel more in tune with the industry and be on top of changing times.

**27. Be a mentor.** Supporting a colleague pays benefits in unexpected ways. It reminds you of what you have already learned and encourages you to apply the skills you possess with new confidence. It is also great practice in coaching, which can be applied at work.

**28. Create a network of colleagues and friends.** Everyone needs help from time to time, if only to let off steam. A professional network helps when you need advice, a sample policy, the answer to a question, or just a friendly face. You can also network with and learn from other professions such as medicine (physicians, nurses, etc.), management, or finance to get additional knowledge and a change of perspective.

**29. Follow up.** If you meet someone at a meeting, get his or her business card and drop them a note or e-mail message to acknowledge the meeting. If you promised to send someone information, remember to send it promptly.

**30. Gain an ally.** Collaborate with someone who has the respect of a group you are trying to reach. For example, if you are implementing a new medical staff policy, gain the support of a key leader of the medical staff.

**31. Practice public speaking.** Take a class, join Toastmasters, or just take every opportunity that comes your way to practice public speaking. Being able to communicate ideas in front of a group of people is a great skill. The more you do it, the more comfortable you'll feel.

**32. Just do it.** Don't be afraid to push your limits and take risks. You don't need to be an expert to take on a new challenge. You just need to have the confidence and motivation to learn what you need to know. Some of the best opportunities you'll ever have will be outside of your comfort zone. You may be tempted to let those opportunities pass by because you're not sure that you can succeed. But you can't grow if you don't push your limits. And you'll discover and develop new skills and aptitudes you never realized you had.

**33. Profile yourself.** Start and maintain an updated personal profile, a collection of information about yourself and your work experience, projects, and accomplishments. It allows for easy collating to react to unanticipated job opportunities that arise within the organization and externally.

**34. Meet a recruiter—even if you aren't looking.** Get to know recruiters even when you aren't in the market for a new job. When you are ready, you'll know one you can trust.

**35. Do informational interviews.** Read healthcare directories to discover healthcare organizations in your city or area that you didn't know existed. Learn something about them. If you're interested in making a change to a different field or role, talk to people who are in that field (or, if you're really interested, talk to the people who hired them). Ask the hard questions, including "would you choose it again?" This should help you measure your skills, experience, and expertise and identify areas that need work.

**36. Expand your horizons.** Don't feel that you have to remain in a "traditional" HIM role. With today's advanced technology and interdisciplinary health teams, there are many opportunities where HIM knowledge is needed and welcome. Talk to people in other areas (speakers at meetings, vendors at conference exhibit halls) to get their perspective on nontraditional positions.

**37. Know the market.** Bookmark Web sites that give you professional salary information and geographical cost of living information. This provides ongoing comparative data and gives you extra leverage when considering an offer.

## Education: Not Just for Kids Anymore

So you think that because you once earned a degree or a certification that you're set for life? Think again. Professionals in all areas are going back to school to enhance their knowledge, get a better job, or earn a higher salary. You can also take advantage of distance education, online learning, and additional professional certification to make lifelong learning part of your agenda.

**38. Fill in the gaps in your knowledge.** Focus on skills you need to acquire (e.g., in business, finance, IS/IT) and find out how you can fill in the gaps. Take advantage of educational sessions presented by your state and national professional association, your local college, or through tuition reimbursement from your employer.

**39. Make lifelong learning your goal.** Learning anything keeps you thinking about what is possible. Add to your knowledge base. Read and review new regulations and methods. Learn about new subjects and new management styles. Read pertinent newspapers and technical journals. Visit related Web sites. Track changes in the law. Attend seminars. Take a class on any subject that interests you.

**40. Go back to school.** The only way to finish is to start. Going back to school not only pays financially, it pays immediately as you apply what you learn in class to your job every day. It will be hard work and it won't always be fun, but you'll reap rewards.

**41. Challenge yourself at a conference or meeting.** At a state or national meeting, attend sessions on something you're not familiar with--say, in the areas of management, information services and technology, or coding and classification. The more you learn about the world outside of your current function, the more you can be flexible to take on new assignments and move up.

**42. Obtain certifications.** Entry-level certification is critical in many positions in this profession and will assist in your quest for advancement. Advanced certification also can help you move ahead.

**43. Become techno-savvy.** Increase your computer and technology knowledge. As health information becomes increasingly computerized and the Internet and e-mail change the way we work, it is critical to keep up. Many national computer stores offer low-cost instruction in software programs. If you don't already have Internet access, investigate a free alternative such as NetZero or take advantage of AHIMA's discounted ISP access.

**44. Teach.** The best way to become proficient in a subject is to teach it. You'll benefit and others will, too.

## Volunteering: Be All You Can Be

AHIMA and state and local HIM organizations offer many opportunities for members to volunteer. These groups are a great training ground to build your skills and a good way to increase your professional networking circle. Here are some ways to make volunteering work for you.

**45. Start at the grass roots.** New to the profession? Become a volunteer at the local or state level of your professional organization. You will make new professional contacts, meet possible mentors, and expand your knowledge base. Volunteering on a committee is an excellent way to learn new skills and manage projects or groups.

**46. Join a committee.** Volunteer on a committee or task force in your professional organization. You'll present yourself as a "can do" person in your organization, build new relationships, and learn new technical and team skills by volunteering.

**47. Run for office.** Have some experience in your state or local organization? Consider running for office. This is a real opportunity to make a difference and be an advocate for the profession, improve your leadership skills, and recruit new

members.

**48. Share your knowledge.** Volunteer to be a speaker at a local or state HIM education meeting or write an article for the newsletter or for the *Journal of AHIMA*. Apply the creativity you use on the job and share your expertise with others.

**49. Meet the key people.** When you attend a professional meeting, don't just visit with people you already know. Introduce yourself to new people. Make an effort to meet and get to know association board members, the program presenters, and other program attendees.

**50. Look for related opportunities.** Consider joining a "special" committee of health professionals who may be linked through a common need. For example, your state may have a payers/providers group that needs an HIM perspective. This kind of involvement can demonstrate your value and worth as an HIM professional. It can also help you evaluate ways that you can take your skills and "create" opportunities for career options that build on your HIM background.

*The Journal thanks the AHIMA volunteers and staff who contributed to this article.*

### ***Tools for Success***

**Karen Czirr, MS, RHIA**

**Current job:** Information security manager, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

"Even though I've chosen a non-traditional role, my education and the plan I set in motion 22 years ago has never let me down," says Czirr. Her career is proof that career changes can be made at any stage in the game. After spending time in what she describes as less rewarding and unchallenging positions, she entered the HIM program at Temple University. There, she mapped out her future in the field. "Because I was already 28 years old, I literally sat down and planned the steps I would take," Czirr explains. She set personal goals and allowed herself to only seek employment opportunities that were in line with those goals.

Some of the challenges Czirr has found on her road to success are maintaining balance between home, work, and community, and more recently, working in an ever-evolving position. Whatever the challenge, though, Czirr comes prepared. "The tools in my toolbox are vision, courage, and a sense of humor," she says.

**Definition of career success:** "Living according to personal agreements, agreements I've made with myself."

### ***Keeping Up With the Flow***

**Johnna Ervin, RHIA**

**Current job:** Operations manager, Caring Connection Home Health Agency

Ervin has held a variety of positions in the medical field, including physician's receptionist, where she was trained to perform billing and coding tasks, teaching a medical secretary transcription program, and director of an HIM department. She found her current position when two friends started a home health agency and needed a hand setting up their computer information and medical record systems. It was then that she became interested in the home health field. As the agency evolved, Ervin was employed to provide in-service education and training in HIM-related areas.

One of the major challenges Ervin has faced is the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, which she says has changed the home health care field from a cost-based payment system to an interim payment system to a prospective payment system. Ervin, however, argues that this challenge has only highlighted the continually rising importance of HIM professionals. "I have been able to demonstrate the value of an HIM professional by exhibiting the education and skills needed to understand new regulations, develop

agency policies, teach and train agency personnel and physicians, and successfully survive the changes with a viable agency intact," says Ervin.

**Definition of career success:** "(Maintaining) satisfactory and optimal information flow, both internally and externally, while successfully conquering new challenges in a setting often compromised by an untrained work force and limited resources."

### *A Clear Vision*

**Lois Yoder, RHIT, CCS**

**Current job:** CEO of the enVision Group, Inc.

Yoder founded the enVision Group, Inc., a resource management and consulting firm, five years ago. A consultant for 14 years, Yoder began her HIM career in a skilled nursing center. She then moved to an acute care hospital where she was trained in coding on the job. From there, she took positions in DRG and coding management roles until she was recruited as a consultant.

Generating corporate or senior leadership support for innovative process improvement strategies has challenged Yoder throughout her career. "Finding ways to convince [senior management] to support your ideas requires use of financial analyses, a concise strategic plan, and little dialogue--in other words, no whining," she says.

Yoder's career seems to give her more reason to cheer than whine. She says a significant turning point in her career has been winning the respect and endorsement of senior leadership in health systems where HIM management functions were still thought of as "basement chores."

**Definition of career success:** "Satisfying personal professional goals and contributing to the betterment of the healthcare delivery system."

### *A Perfect Balance*

**Susan N. Postal, MBA, RHIA**

**Current job:** Vice president of health information management services for HCA

Postal's career began in what she describes as more traditional HIM positions. "I began my career involved in the important day-to-day functions of a successful HIM department," she says, citing positions as file clerk, project manager, assistant director, and director. Now she leads a department of 56 HIM professionals and support team members who provide coding and HIM services.

Postal finds that strategic thinking and career management were and are an important part of her success. Overcoming the challenge of balancing short-term, intermediate, and long-term business objectives is another key to success. "My current approach is to continue to find new paths to achieve the same ultimate goal," Postal says.

To speed her on those paths, Postal relies on her wealth of HIM experience. "Capitalizing on my HIM background and taking it outside of the traditional walls of the HIM department has made a real difference," she says.

**Definition of career success:** "Being the best you can be in the role you have. If you know that you are giving your position and the company the best of your time, energy, and talent, you can reach a level of contentment that is unbelievably rewarding."

### *Career Cornerstones*

**Cheryl Hammen, RHIT**

**Current job:** Assistant vice president of HIM for Community Health Systems, Brentwood, TN

When Hammen started working in HIM 23 years ago, she was still searching for what she wanted to do in healthcare. After only a few months, she realized she'd found her calling. Since then, Hammen has worked at the American Hospital Association in the Central Office on ICD-9-CM and served as an editorial staff member for Coding Clinic for ICD-9-CM. She later chose a career in consulting, then accepted her current position in 2001. Throughout her career, she has also been able to share her knowledge by speaking for healthcare organizations and contributing to industry publications.

"Knowledge that is shared benefits the profession as a whole," she says.

Hammen says she has been very fortunate to have mentors who helped her realize her potential and has managed to be in the right place at the right time and knowing the right people. Additionally, Hammen argues that hard work and expertise in subject matter are most important in the progression of a successful career.

**Definition of career success:** "Performing well the work that you love, while transferring your knowledge to other HIM professionals."

***Triumphant Transitions*****Marcia Kalata, RHIA**

**Current job:** Director, HIM services/privacy officer, Kaiser Permanente (Ohio region)

Kalata's resume reads like a current affairs in HIM list. Not only did she assume the role of privacy officer last year for the Ohio region of Kaiser Permanente, but she is also an integral part of implementing automated systems and the electronic medical record.

Kalata began her career as a medical record clerk and later became a medical transcriptionist. After beginning her hospital clinicals in nursing school, Kalata found that she didn't enjoy "hands-on" patient care. She completed the requirements to become an accredited record technician, and, eventually, obtained a BA in management. She has been applying that knowledge ever since to her current position, which she says has allowed her to learn more about the business side of healthcare, volunteer for projects outside the traditional HIM director role, and accept increasing responsibility.

One of the biggest challenges Kalata has faced in her career has been making the transition from paper to electronic medical records. According to Kalata, this was especially difficult because of Kaiser's multiple facilities. She seized the opportunity, however, and notes it as a significant turning point in her career. "As the scope of my position increased, I hired a team of experienced, credentialed HIM professionals and learned to delegate to and trust them," she says.

**Definition of career success:** "Being considered the expert on HIM at Kaiser Ohio. Also, recognizing that my greatest accomplishments have been through team and not individual efforts."

***Just the Right Ingredients*****Susan Dowell, MBA, RHIA**

**Current job:** Chief operating officer and chief financial officer for Wang Healthcare Information Systems

Maintaining balance with career and personal life is perhaps one of the most important contributions to the success of Dowell's career. "My career has been fulfilling, challenging, and exciting all in the right proportions," she says.

Dowell has been fulfilling her goals at Wang Healthcare for almost five years. Before that, she practiced in a variety of healthcare settings including psychiatric, rural, urban, and university. In addition, she also served as president of AHIMA in 1992.

Her experience is in a variety of aspects of the profession for a reason--only through taking on more and varied opportunities does Dowell feel challenged.

"I made a point in my career of never saying no to a potential opportunity even if its outcome was uncertain," she says. And with that type of attitude, Dowell has been able to say "yes" to a lot of things, including a successful career. "I believed throughout my career that a positive, winning attitude was the key to success," she says.

**Definition of career success:** "Being respected for making a contribution to my company and my profession on an ongoing basis. Also, working hard to have a very balanced and healthy lifestyle."

### ***Continual Learning, Continued Success***

**Lou Ann Schraffenberger, RHIA, CCS, CCS-P**

**Current job:** Manager of clinical data, clinical information services department, Advocate Health Care

Schraffenberger admits that she didn't always have a clear plan in mind when it came to her career goals. When first planning her career, she was interested in becoming either a nurse or a kindergarten teacher. However, Schraffenberger's mother suggested a career in HIM, and she was right.

After deciding on HIM, Schraffenberger set out to tackle the numerous opportunities in clinical coding, classification systems, and education. "I just tried to decide what I liked to do and what I was good at and take advantage of the opportunities that came my way," she says.

Those opportunities took the form of a variety of positions, including instructor, director of medical records, and coding lecturer. Schraffenberger still teaches part-time at two community colleges and serves on the advisory board for the University of Illinois at Chicago. She has also written for several HIM publications. She adds, "Even today, 27-plus years since graduation, I keep trying to do better."

**Definition of career success:** "Being recognized for what you know and what you can share and contribute, knowing you have a future in your industry and wanting to remain part of it, and contributing to the larger picture or mission of the industry you work in."

### ***Education: an Investment in Today and Tomorrow***

There's no question about it--education is an investment. It's an investment of time, money, and energy. But as statistics show, it's an investment in yourself and your career that pays off. According to the 2001 AHIMA Membership Assessment, education level has a direct correlation to both salary and job title for AHIMA members.

While 38 percent of members surveyed earn more than \$50,000 annually, that percentage jumps to 47 percent for those with a bachelor's degree and 65 percent for those with a master's or other advanced degree. The correlation between education level and salary is even more pronounced in higher salary ranges. While 7 percent of all members surveyed earn \$90,000 or more per year, 8 percent of those with a bachelor's degree and 39 percent with an advanced degree are earning at that level.

HIM educators agree. Kathy LaTour, MA, RHIA, chair of the HIM department at College of St. Scholastica, notes, "We have an RHIT to RHIA progression program (in which RHITs can earn a bachelor's degree and be eligible to sit for the RHIA exam) and a master's in HIM program.



Graduates of those programs generally see significant increases in salary, and perhaps more importantly, upward mobility in types of positions, leadership roles in their organizations, and increased responsibility."

Elizabeth Layman's career epitomizes the benefits of education. Layman, PhD, RHIA, CCS, FAHIMA, professor and chair of the HIM department at East Carolina University, says, "Between getting my RHIA and PhD, I more than tripled my salary. Every time I got another degree, I got rewarded: better jobs, more interesting jobs, and more money. Education is the answer."

### **For More Than Money**

A better salary needn't be the only motivation for pursuing education. The advantages that can accompany a bachelor's or advanced degree may outshine a monetary increase.

"My general observation is that the prime motivator for most of our students is a better title, increased recognition in the organization, and increased opportunity for advancement and leadership roles. I think that higher salary is a motivator but not the most important," says LaTour.

Indeed, for those seeking a better job title, additional education is a reliable boost to the next level. Those with titles at a level of director or above make up 22 percent of AHIMA survey respondents, while that percentage climbs to 27 percent for those with a bachelor's degree and 37 percent for those with a master's or doctorate degree.

Sometimes, it's a love of the field that brings HIM professionals back to school. According to LaTour, "We have students in our programs in the late career/late middle age range who simply want the satisfaction of completing the next educational step before retirement."

### **Embrace the Possibilities**

Have you considered going back to school for your bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree? Before making the leap, take time to explore what kind of commitment it will require. "You need to estimate the up-front costs and expenses in terms of time, effort, and money to determine if the advanced degree and position will generate increased income that at least allows you to recoup your initial investment and hopefully provide you with greater earning potential over time," says Angela Picard, MED, RHIA, HIM program director, St. Petersburg College. Layman agrees: "I think you have to sacrifice. Nothing is for free. Sacrifice now for future benefits."

Don't think of education as an investment that pays off only in the long run. In your very first class, you'll be challenged and supported by peers who share your passion for the HIM profession. LaTour says, "The satisfaction of continuing to learn and develop professionally, the ability to compete in a dynamic and varied job market, and the opportunity to interact with other professionals (both faculty and students) in a learning situation are all benefits of continuing education."

*To locate an AHIMA-accredited HIM program, go to [www.ahima.org/careers](http://www.ahima.org/careers).*

### **For Privacy Experts**

Earlier this year, AHIMA announced a proposed new credential that offers members the opportunity to formalize their privacy and security expertise.

AHIMA's Certified in Healthcare Privacy (CHP) credential is designed to denote advanced competency in designing, implementing, and administering comprehensive privacy protection programs in all types of healthcare organizations. AHIMA's House of Delegates will vote on whether to

approve the standards for initial certification and maintenance of certification in April. With the House's approval, the Association will begin testing for the credential this fall.

The new credential will be offered as part of a collaborative agreement with the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS). While AHIMA will offer the privacy credential, HIMSS will offer a security credential ("Certified in Healthcare Security"). AHIMA and HIMSS will jointly offer a combined credential as well ("Certified in Healthcare Privacy and Security").

For more information, see the March 2002 issue of AHIMA *Advantage* or the discussions and resources in the AHIMA Community of Practice at [www.ahima.org](http://www.ahima.org). Contact AHIMA's certification department at (312) 233-1100 or e-mail [certdept@ahima.org](mailto:certdept@ahima.org).

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