AHIMA Continues Support for Essential Standards

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By AHIMA's Advocacy and Policy Team

Standards are a foundational element for managing health information without regard for the type of media used in its capture and use.

The year 2014 is expected to be one of collaboration between standards organizations as the world recognizes the need for use of standards to achieve better quality and consistency in healthcare.

AHIMA has active representation at key standards development organizations, including the World Health Organization Family of International Classifications (WHO-FIC), the International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation (IHTSDO), Health Level Seven International (HL7), and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

AHIMA has held the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Designated Secretary for the ISO Technical Committee (TC) for 215 Health Informatics since 2011 and supports the representation and participation in selected work groups that is essential for advancing health informatics standards.

WHO-FIC Progresses ICD Work

AHIMA members Sue Bowman, MJ, RHIA, CCS, FAHIMA, Kathy Giannangelo, MA, RHIA, CCS, CPHIMS, FAHIMA, Rita Scichilone, MHSA, RHIA, CCS, CCS-P, and Joanne Valerious, MPH, RHIA—as well as Margaret Skurka, MS, RHIA, CCS, FAHIMA, representing IFHIMA—attended the annual WHO-FIC meeting in Beijing, China in 2013.

There is significant work in process for updating and improving the international classification standards, including the next version of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD). Bowman is the secretariat of the Morbidity Topic Advisory Group and provides input to the ICD-11 development. Scichilone and Giannangelo are members of the Education and Implementation Committee and observers for the Informatics and Terminology Committee. Valerious has been appointed to the Functioning and Disability Reference Group. The theme of the 2013 meeting was "Universal Health Coverage: Information and Innovation."

Plenary sessions of interest included:

- Universal Health Coverage
- ICD Revision
- Development of Health Informatics in China and Its Future
- International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health in China
- Introduction of Chinese Classification of Health Interventions and Information Management in China
- Traditional Medicine Classification and Coding

Meeting materials are available from the WHO-FIC website at http://apps.who.int/classifications/network/meeting2013/en/.

AHIMA Part of IHTSDO Showcase

AHIMA participated in the IHTSDO Showcase held October 10-11, 2013 in the Washington, DC area. There was significant interest in the HIM profession and the association's involvement in international standards development. AHIMA members are involved in standing committees and other IHTSDO initiatives supporting the SNOMED CT standard and its use.

Bringing HIM Principles to HL7

AHIMA also supports HL7 standards by attending workgroups, where AHIMA staff aim to bring the importance of health information management principles and guidance in technology standards to the table. The HL7 Plenary and Working Group Meeting was held September 22-26, 2013 in Cambridge, MA. This standards organization is the global authority on standards for interoperability of health information and has more than 40 work groups dedicated to specialized areas of interest, which include electronic health records and personal health records. In 2013, Harry Rhodes, RHIA, CHPS, CDIP, FAHIMA, MBA, CPHIMS, a director of HIM practice excellence at AHIMA, served as a co-chair for the Mobile Health Committee, while Scichilone served as a co-chair of the Process Improvement Committee. AHIMA representation in the workgroups for Records Management and Evidentiary Support, Electronic Submission of Medical Documentation, Usability of EHRs, EHR System Functional Model, and other standards of interest to HIM professionals continues in 2014.

ISO TC 215 Advances Health Informatics

AHIMA ran a ISO TC 215 plenary meeting to advance international standards in health informatics in Sydney, Australia October 21-25, 2013. AHIMA staff member Lisa Spellman, MBA, CPHIMS, is international secretary to the ISO Technical Committee 215 and administrator for the US Technical Advisory Group. ISO standards for health informatics is an important initiative for the AHIMA strategic plan, as the use of health IT is essential to managing health information in electronic environments. For more information about ISO TC 215, where technical reports, technical specifications, and international standards are developed, visit www.ahima.org/about/global?tabid=ISO.

ONC Expanding Blue Button Initiative

The Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) remains active on a wide range of policy fronts, including consumer engagement—with particular emphasis on the office's Blue Button Initiative. Blue Button is a national program that allows patients to view and download personal health information. Several US government agencies participate, including the US Department of Defense, Department of Health and Human Services, and Department of Veterans Affairs. The program also has pledges of support from many stakeholders including providers, health plans, and personal health record vendors. Organizations and sites that use Blue Button allow consumers to download their health data and create medical histories which can then be shared with their healthcare providers.

In September 2013, ONC held its third annual "Consumer Health IT Summit: Accelerating the Blue Button Movement." The event focused on empowering patients to become better managers of their health in the digital era. An important step in this direction will be the unveiling of the Blue Button Connector in 2014. The Blue Button Connector will be a tool that enables patients to identify which providers and plans offer the Blue Button.

At this year's House of Delegates meeting at the 85th Annual AHIMA Convention and Exhibit, AHIMA announced a public good advocacy campaign for the Blue Button Initiative and MyPHR.com, which included AHIMA taking the Blue Button Pledge. The program includes pledges of support from stakeholders to make it easier for individuals and their caregivers to have secure, timely, and electronic access to their health information. AHIMA's campaign calls for action from AHIMA's component state associations (CSAs) as well as individual AHIMA members. This effort is part of AHIMA's strategic plan to engage consumers in their healthcare by actively participating in the capture and use of their own health information. The support for the Blue Button campaign also ties into one of the components of AHIMA's strategic plan—advancing the public good.

HITPC Recommends AOD Guidelines

On December 4, 2013, the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT's Health Information Technology Policy Committee (HITPC) unanimously approved recommendations on accounting of disclosures (AOD) guidelines.

The recommendations were developed by the HITPC Privacy and Security Tiger Team, and discussed how to implement the long-awaited ARRA-HITECH requirement for HIPAA-covered entities to account for disclosures of personal health information for treatment, payment, and healthcare operations made through an electronic health record (EHR).

The recommendations focus on:

- The patient's right to a report of disclosures outside the entity or organized healthcare arrangement
- The patient's right to an investigation of accesses inside the entity

The HITPC will provide the recommendations to the acting National Coordinator for Health Information Technology for consideration in the development of a final rule on accounting of disclosures, which will be created by the Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Civil Rights. As of press time, there was no timetable set for publication of the AOD final rule. The genesis of these recommendations comes from the May 31, 2011 publication of the Office for Civil Rights Accounting of Disclosures Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, which proposed two rights for individuals—an accounting of disclosures and an access report.

AHIMA provided comments in 2011, and testified at the HITPC Tiger Team AOD virtual hearings on September 30, 2013. To review AHIMA's testimony, visit www.ahima.org/about/advocacy under "Recent Testimony and Comments."

With the active agenda of ONC, the continued evolution of standards, the continued focus of Congress on healthcare issues, and the coming transition to ICD-10-CM/PCS, it will undoubtedly be a busy year. AHIMA continues to advocate for the HIM perspective in each of these areas.

The AHIMA Advocacy and Policy Team (advocacyandpolicy@ahima.org) is based in Washington, DC.

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