

AHIMA Welcomes the HIM World Community

Save to myBoK

by Linda Kloss, RHIA, CAE, executive vice president/CEO

We're thrilled to host the 14th Congress of the International Federation of Health Records Organizations (IFHRO), the long-awaited gathering of HIM professionals from 30 countries, in Washington, DC. IFHRO was established in 1968 to advance professional practice, assist developing countries to establish basic health record practices, health information, and health records education, and provide guidance on establishing national HIM associations.

HIM today is a global discipline where professionals in both industrialized and developing nations face a variety of common and sometimes interconnected issues:

- Many countries have initiatives to advance the use of health IT, including electronic health records (EHRs).
- Standards development and accreditation organizations are international in scope and reach.
- The World Health Organization develops ICD-10 and other classification systems, and we have only to consider SARS to understand the importance of these systems.
- SNOMED, other terminologies, and systems such as DRGs are being adopted by many countries.

For those who will be attending the convention, the feature articles that follow will whet your appetites. Presentations and workshops will explore these issues in greater detail, and many of the authors and organizations will be present. For those who have not yet made their plans, it's not too late to register.

Our International HIM Learning Community

Rosemary Roberts and colleagues from the National Centre for Classification in Health in Australia help us understand the relationship between ICD-10 and SNOMED in "Avoiding a War of Words (and Numbers): The Uncertain Future of Terminologies and Classifications." Some in the US have suggested SNOMED CT mitigates the need for ICD-10. The insights of these Australian experts can help us shape national thinking and policy in the US and other countries wrestling with how to ensure the very best data.

In "Name Game: Canada's Blueprint for a Nationwide Master Person Index" by Linda Dorrel, Lorraine Fernandes, and Jeff Laskoski, we learn about Canada's Health Infoway and, specifically, its plans to create client registries to link records. Again, Canada's progress offers insights about how health information may be linked in the US.

Anne Rooney and Paul vanOstenberg of the Joint Commission International describe the growth of international accreditation in "International Accreditation: What's Good Practice in São Paulo Is Good Practice in Istanbul." The authors note that 50 healthcare organizations in 12 countries have been awarded international accreditation by the Joint Commission, and this number is growing. Using a consistent standard for management of information will bring our HIM world community closer.

In "Creating an HIM Profession in the Sultanate of Oman," G.D. Mogli describes his country's agenda to move from virtually no systematic medical records or medical record services to the foundations of a national EHR system in less than 20 years.

To a New Beginning in Collaboration

While our cost and payment systems differ and while access to healthcare and basic technology may vary, our world needs a uniformly high HIM standard. It is our hope that the 14th congress be remembered as a remarkable learning experience for all and that it marks the beginning of a new era for international collaboration to advance HIM practice.

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