

Aligning Strategies for the Future

Save to myBoK

By Lynne Thomas Gordon, MBA, RHIA, FACHE, CAE, FAHIMA, chief executive officer

At AHIMA's 2014 Annual Convention and Exhibit, held in San Diego, CA, National Coordinator for Health IT Karen DeSalvo, MD, MPH, MSc, announced that the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) was in the process of refreshing its federal health IT strategic plan for the next five years.

A draft of the plan was released at the end of 2014 for review and comment by the industry. The document focuses on ONC's efforts to collect, share, and use interoperable health information to improve healthcare, public health, and research. I was particularly interested to see its vision statement: "Health information is accessible when and where it is needed to improve and protect people's health and well-being."¹ This is very similar to the tagline found in AHIMA's strategic plan, published in 2013: "Health information where and when it's needed."²

A number of ONC's goals and tactics complement AHIMA's strategic priorities, such as increased focus on health IT standards and interoperability, continued emphasis on protecting privacy and security, and an understanding of the importance of bolstering public health. Patient empowerment is a theme, too: "Health IT can help empower individuals, their families, and other caregivers to engage in shared decision-making with their providers on their wellness and quality of life goals, manage their health in convenient and meaningful ways, and result in better individual outcomes," ONC's strategic plan says.

It's encouraging to see that the HIM profession is in sync with federal priorities. Both strategic plans are worth reading, if you haven't done so yet.

From Vision to Reality

But, as an industry, we're not there yet. In fact, we have some distance to go, as the articles in this month's *Journal of AHIMA* illustrate. In our cover story, "Fixing a Broken EHR," Mary Butler surveys the current challenges posed by electronic health record (EHR) systems and the "meaningful use" EHR Incentive Program. HIM professionals are increasingly the individuals who are leading their organizations to make EHRs function properly and maximize their benefits for the organization.

As well as compliance with meaningful use, complying with IT technology-related security requirements poses a continual challenge, particularly for small and medium-size organizations. Anne M. Rogers tells how one mid-sized organization made significant improvements to its security infrastructure in "[Privacy and Security for All: Building the 'Model Clinic' for Healthcare Security and Compliance](#)."

Finally, in "[Ready or Not, HIM is Changing](#)," Ryan Sandefer and Ellen Shakespeare Karl describe a recent survey of AHIMA members to better understand how current HIM skills match with the Council for Excellence in Education's new competencies. Areas of opportunity for improvement include project management, information governance, and informatics.

These articles show an industry in more of a transitional "growing pains" phase. But HIM professionals have the tools to make the envisioned future of HIM a reality. I look forward to seeing our progress.

Notes

1. Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology. "Federal Health IT Strategic Plan 2015-2020." December 8, 2014. p. 3. www.healthit.gov/sites/default/files/federal-healthIT-strategic-plan-2014.pdf.
2. AHIMA. "[2014-2017 Strategic Plan](#)." 2013.

Article citation:

Gordon, Lynne Thomas. "Aligning Strategies for the Future" *Journal of AHIMA* 86, no.3 (March 2015): 17.

Driving the Power of Knowledge

Copyright 2022 by The American Health Information Management Association. All Rights Reserved.