

# Association Benefits from Collaborative Dialogue

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by Barbara Siegel, MS, RHIT

One hundred years ago, Guglielmo Marconi used Morse code to initiate “a dialogue that seemed like pure magic” between President Theodore Roosevelt and England’s King Edward VII.<sup>1</sup> Marconi’s efforts paved the way for wireless communication, including AHIMA’s Communities of Practice (CoP), the Association’s virtual member networking tool.

Face-to-face dialogue among leaders and members remains one of our strengths. Team Talks, initiated in 1993, bring together national and state leaders and AHIMA members and staff each March. These and other forms of communication act as a continuous collaborative dialogue throughout the Association.

## A Strategic Focus

At this year’s Team Talks, we began with an overview of AHIMA’s operational plan. For 2003, the Association is focused on the work force, membership, e-HIM, and HIM education. The first highlights of the work force research appeared in the April issue of *AHIMA Advantage*, followed by “Who We Are: Findings from the 2002 Member Survey” in May’s *Journal*. After reading these articles, join in the dialogue and share your thoughts and ask questions in the CoP.

Membership reached an all-time high in 2002 thanks to successful recruitment efforts, including the Member-Get-a-Member and Student-Get-a-Student programs. The e-HIM and formal education initiatives are advancing with input from industry leaders, academic thinkers, members, and employers.

This year’s Team Talks attendees were encouraged to ponder questions like: How can AHIMA educate members of the public about their health information and health information rights? What is AHIMA’s role in the globalization of HIM practice? Join with the 200 Team Talks attendees and share your ideas on these and other issues.

## Leveraging Our Federation

AHIMA has a long history as a federation. Each component state association (CSA) has its own name, bylaws, officers, structure, and budget. Portions of the national dues are rebated to the states and representation is based on membership size.

Ongoing input and collaboration with state leadership led to the creation of the CSA Advisory Task Force. The task force was responsible for drafting an agreement that brings state bylaws into compliance with national bylaws, provides safeguards to volunteers, and ensures that all AHIMA members receive a consistent, high level of service. There is still more work to be done. Touch base with your Team Talks representatives to learn more about the discussions and recommendations.

## Tapping Out Our Message

Today communication is instantaneous. As AHIMA members, we reap the benefits of Marconi’s success. Join in the dialogue with your peers via the CoP. Tap into the FORE Library: HIM Body of Knowledge and add to the more than 1,000,000 online hits the site has received. Continue the discussion at state and local meetings, summer leadership, Team Talks, and, of course, at the National Convention in Minneapolis this October.

## Note

1. “Getting the Message Across.” *The Journal News* (January 19, 2003).

Barbara Siegel ([bsiegel@humed.com](mailto:bsiegel@humed.com)) is director of health information at Hackensack University Medical Center in Hackensack, NJ.

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