

# Believe in HIM, and Yourself

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By Kathleen A. Frawley, JD, MS, RHIA, FAHIMA

During the past year Patty Thierry Sheridan, AHIMA's past president, spoke eloquently about the power of dreaming big dreams. I am going to build on those ideas this year by talking about the importance of believing.

It is important that you believe in yourself, believe in AHIMA, and believe in the indispensable role health information management professionals play in our technologically driven 21st-century healthcare system.

In 1918, the Hospital Standardization Program called for accurate and complete medical records. In 1928, 35 health information management (HIM) pioneers made the journey to Boston, MA, for the Hospital Standardization Conference. At the event's conclusion, the Association of Record Librarians of North America-the association that eventually evolved into the AHIMA we know today-was formed, and the field of HIM was born.

AHIMA celebrates its 85th anniversary this year. Much has changed in those years, but many of the core issues that prompted Massachusetts General Hospital Medical Librarian Grace Whiting Myers and her colleagues to found the organization still comprise our daily work.

Data integrity will continue to be important as we transition to electronic health records, ensuring that the correct information is linked to the correct patient. This integrity will become even more important as healthcare providers participate in health information exchanges.

Quality and patient safety are paramount to healthcare providers. It is up to HIM professionals to make sure patient information is held to the high standards of accuracy and completeness. HIM professionals will need to assume responsibility for data and information governance in the electronic health record environment.

AHIMA has always advocated for confidentiality, privacy, and security. HIM professionals have assumed a critical role in ensuring that a patient's medical record is protected from unauthorized use and disclosure.

Since the inception of the HITECH Act's breach notification rule three years ago, however, over 20 million Americans' health information has been compromised. If you visit the website for the Department of Health and Human Services, you will find that mobile and portable devices such as laptops, smartphones, and tablets were involved in many of these breaches. You will also note that if the breached information had been encrypted, many individuals would not have had to worry about the possibility of identity theft.

AHIMA and HIM professionals need to continue our effort to educate the public. We must ensure not only that patient information is secure on patient portals, but that patients understand how to access and understand their own health information as well. We need to assist patients so they can be their most effective advocates for the best possible care.

The only way HIM as a profession can ensure quality health information is if each of you believes it can be done. It starts with believing in yourself and believing in the added, essential value that HIM professionals bring and contribute to healthcare.

It is time to engage, to connect, and to embrace the chance to help write the history of 21st-century HIM and healthcare in this country.

Believe!

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**Article citation:**

Frawley, Kathleen A.. "Believe in HIM, and Yourself" *Journal of AHIMA* 84, no.1 (January 2013): 10.

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