

Bringing HIM to Every Corner of Healthcare

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By Melissa Martin, RHIA, CCS, CHTS-IM

Remember our association's theme from last year: HIM without walls?

In June I accepted a new professional role as the assistant vice president of the Heart and Vascular Institute at West Virginia University Medicine, which has been an amazing opportunity.

Shortly after the announcement, a young HIM professional stopped by to congratulate me and let me know I would be missed. She then said, "You're the president of AHIMA and I just can't believe you are leaving HIM." I thought for a moment and replied, "But I'm not leaving the HIM profession." She was perplexed at first and didn't see how I could still be working in the HIM profession once I started my new position with the Heart and Vascular Institute. We discussed the concept of HIM without walls, as well as AHIMA's strategic plan, and after a while she had a whole new view on what being an "HIM professional" could mean. She was thinking about all kinds of career opportunities for herself as well.

My new role may not be in the health information management department, but HIM is proliferating throughout healthcare organizations. Information governance is an executive accountability framework put in place to support organization staff that use information to meet the vision, mission, and values for an entire institution.

Informatics is the discovery and interpretation of information in meaningful patterns, which is key to the aspects of healthcare that work to support population health and business intelligence. In my new role, I will be ensuring our information is available to caregivers and patients alike. I will be making sure that we have good information integrity and that we are in compliance with regulations and retaining information to treat our patients. Most importantly, in my new role there is no doubt that I will continue to be a health information management professional.

I think this would be a great time to reiterate AHIMA's vision, mission, and values, introduced just last month at our CSA Leadership Symposium in Chicago, IL. AHIMA's vision is to improve health through trusted information, with the mission of transforming healthcare by leading health information management, informatics, and information governance. The values we seek to uphold in this mission are leadership, integrity, excellence, and respect.

The association's four strategic categories—informatics and analytics, information governance, pathways to HIM's emerging roles, and connecting consumers—are important to healthcare as a whole, not just when applied specifically within the "HIM department."

We are truly a profession without walls. It's time to inspire big thinking to launch our future throughout the healthcare industry.

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