

# Building a Bridge Between Data and Knowledge

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By Wylecia Wiggs Harris, PhD, CAE, chief executive officer

This summer, the healthcare industry was reminded of the value of data with an announcement regarding the rules of ICD-10-CM. *Coding Clinic* published guidance reaffirming that providers can assign social determinant codes (which identify persons with potential health hazards related to socioeconomic and psychosocial circumstances) in ICD-10-CM based on documentation from any member of the care team. These are not new codes, as AHIMA's Sue Bowman, MJ, RHIA, CCS, FAHIMA, told the *Journal of AHIMA*, but the guidance is a bit of a push to encourage providers to report them, even if the only documentation to support them is from a non-physician.<sup>1</sup>

For years, HIM professionals have talked about making the connection between healthcare data and knowledge. That connection is possible through analytics—the process of systematically analyzing data to understand what it's telling us. Now, with the growth of electronic health records and the unprecedented proliferation of data, as well as drivers such as precision medicine and new payment models, HIM professionals have an opportunity to put data analytics to use in new ways—and in new settings.

HIM professionals in hospitals are using data analytics, but there is potential in other parts of healthcare, too. The articles in this month's issue explore how analytics are being used... in ways you might not expect.

Non-acute care areas are realizing the value of analytics, which could open new doors for HIM professionals. In "Niche Analytics," Mary Butler explores how program-specific types of data analytics in cancer programs, long-term care, and other settings provide an opportunity to work with data and help specialty areas maximize their services and improve patient care, as well as boost big-picture activities such as evaluating new treatments and resources and strategic planning.

Attendees at this year's Advocacy Summit heard a compelling presentation from Megan O'Boyle, the principal investigator of the Phelan-McDermid Syndrome International Registry and the Phelan-McDermid Syndrome Data Network, which advocates for patients with this rare, debilitating genetic syndrome. In "Deliverance in the Data," Mary Butler tells how O'Boyle—who didn't have a background in data analytics—learned about the importance of the field when her daughter was diagnosed with the syndrome. This article shows how consumers can make data analytics work for them.

Healthcare rankings such as HealthGrades and *US News & World Report* Best Hospital Rankings are making an impact in the industry, but not everyone understands how these rankings are created. In "HIM's Vital Role in Healthcare Ratings," Daniel Land, RHIA, CCS, demystifies the myriad rankings and highlights how HIM can impact them. Data and analytics have a big role in these rankings, since the data typically informs hospital and provider measurement.

I hope these articles will pique your curiosity about the promising field of data analytics. If they do, AHIMA's Data Institute: Making Information Meaningful, on December 6-7 in Las Vegas, NV is a great avenue to learn more. The move to data analytics is a natural progression and an important one as we continue to work to turn data into knowledge.

## Note

1. Butler, Mary. "Social Determinant ICD-10 Codes Can Be Assigned Based on Non-physician Documentation." *Journal of AHIMA* website, July 6, 2018. <http://journal.ahima.org/2018/07/06/social-determinant-icd-10-codes-can-be-assigned-based-on-non-physician-documentation/>.

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