

Building the Door to Information Governance

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By Lydia Washington, MS, RHIA, CPHIMS

[“If opportunity doesn’t knock, build a door.”](#)

—[Milton Berle](#)

I often think of the emerging field of information governance (IG) as the “door” referenced in the above quote. As the “door” to making our health information better, more useful, and more relevant, IG represents the best opportunity to derive greater value from that information. Among other things, this means:

- Making information easier to find (availability)
- Being sure we can trust information (integrity)
- Knowing what to keep and what to get rid of, especially since we are currently inundated with information (retention and disposition)
- How to best protect information from breach or loss (protection)
- Knowing who is responsible for doing what with information (accountability)

We have always strived to do these things, but they have not always been a priority until a problem or pressing issue presents itself. Therein lies the opportunity—to take a more proactive and organized approach to addressing information-related issues—to begin to understand and treat information as the critical asset that it is. This means taking a holistic approach that breaks down the silos that result in a one-off approach to handling issues as they crop up or in response to external mandates. Most importantly, it means doing this with the engagement and support of organizational leaders who see to it that longstanding issues are addressed and that the organization’s information is up to the challenge of meeting the ever changing requirements of the healthcare clinical and business environment.

Change is a constant and nowhere is this more obvious than in the new types and uses for information that we encounter daily. IG is necessary if we are to meet changing needs and take advantage of new opportunities.

Over the coming months, this blog will explore the evolving opportunities and examine the challenges associated with information governance. At AHIMA we are working hard to help the healthcare community “build doors” with IG.

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