

# Celebrating the Past, Shaping the Future

Save to myBoK

by Barbara Siegel, MS, RHIT

Twenty years ago, I thought technology was going to save the world of HIM. When I graduated from Rockland Community College, ICD-9 was just being implemented. This was followed by DRGs, which created recognition for medical record professionals. But the technology supporting HIM functions was still in its infancy. Typewriters were just being replaced with clunky, slow word processors. Coworkers told me that the electronic record was only 10 years away.

In 1987, I attended my first National Convention in Baltimore, when a vendor flew a group of clients to see his company's new HIM solution—optical scanning. We thought this was the dawn of a new era—and the end of our paper problems.

Although we've made progress toward the electronic health record (EHR), the transition is creating new challenges. HIM professionals are busy redesigning workflow while participating in the implementation of clinical systems. Patients and consumers will soon demand easy access to their information. We must take the lead now toward the EHR.

## A Time for Innovation

One of AHIMA's important initiatives will focus on electronic health information management (e-HIM). Our vision is to advance the full implementation of EHR technology and full deployment of technology to improve HIM practice. We will launch a multifront initiative to support the industry-wide efforts to achieve the EHR and e-HIM by the end of this decade.

Our e-HIM initiative will provide tools and education for our members to ensure that HIM is at the table to share our expertise in complete, accessible, safe, secure, and standardized content. As we take this important step into the future, I challenge each of you to be champions for change.

AHIMA is taking other steps to move the profession into the future. Three initiatives continue from 2002 into 2003:

- Through its **work force study**, AHIMA is gaining greater understanding—and hard data—about how the field of HIM is changing and how it will continue to change into the future. We will share additional data with you in the months to come.
- We are working to ensure **membership retention** and growth for the future by assessing your needs as a member and redoubling our efforts to meet and exceed them. The Communities of Practice and the FORE Library: HIM Body of Knowledge are two examples of innovations that came out of discussions with members about their need for greater access to other members and to information resources.
- In formal education, we are supporting accreditation standards that focus on **educational outcomes**. AHIMA has also invested in marketing and public relations to help recruit students into academic programs for health information technology and administration.

## A Continual Mission

As we look to the future, we are also celebrating a milestone that few organizations achieve. In 2003, AHIMA celebrates its 75th anniversary. And even more rare than this milestone itself is the fact that as an organization we have been true to our original mission—to **improve patient care through information**. We recognize that the accomplishments of past association leaders resulted in important changes to strengthen the HIM profession and AHIMA. Throughout the year we'll highlight selected people, places, and developments from AHIMA's rich history in the *Journal of AHIMA*, so keep watching.

In our diamond anniversary year, let's celebrate our past by shaping the future of HIM.

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