

Change Right Before Our Eyes

[Save to myBoK](#)

By Lynne Thomas Gordon, MBA, RHIA, FACHE, CAE, chief executive officer

“Evolution” and “change” are two words that come to my mind when I think about how the move to electronic health records (EHR) has altered the nature of the work we do. AHIMA has been talking about this change for as long as I can remember. But now it’s happening right before our eyes.

The move to EHRs has already made indelible changes to our work flow and our job descriptions. In some cases, as with transcription, the changes have been dramatic. We’ll soon see other parts of HIM, such as coding, changing in big ways too. At a more general level, EHRs are not only changing the way we work, but the way we describe our professional selves as well. We are coming to the realization that HIM is more than a department. Instead, it is a profession that is broadening its identity.

Our responsibility as HIM professionals is both to facilitate and to manage this change. The management part is particularly important for ourselves, our staff, and our organizations. I always return to one of change management literature’s “greatest hits,” *Managing Transitions* by William Bridges, PhD. Bridges notes that “It isn’t the changes that do you in, it’s the transitions.”¹ If a change is to actually succeed, getting people through the transition is the most important part of the process.

Charting the Future

Bridges is right. It’s one thing to talk about managing change. It’s another to do it.

That’s why AHIMA is continually striving to create new, practical tools for our members to use in this time of change. One of the newest tools is the HIM Career Map, an interactive and visual representation of the job titles and roles that make up the scope of HIM and the career pathways associated with them. The map, available online at [Hicareers.com](https://www.ahima.org/ahima-career-map), is arranged by six broad job families and four skill levels, and highlights 67 jobs-including emerging roles. Driven by data from volunteer subject matter experts, AHIMA staff, and a member survey, the HIM Career Map shows where the field is now as well as where it is heading in the next five years. I’m proud to say that it is also the first career map of its kind in the healthcare profession. Tools like the HIM Career Map are one way AHIMA is helping you stay on course in a time of transition.

This month’s *Journal* features several topics that have seen striking change recently. In “[Transcription Beyond Transcription](#),” Michael Carnrite and Susan Sumner examine how transcription is evolving beyond the basics and moving into new areas such as meaningful use, clinical documentation improvement, and other HIM functions. A buzzword comes to life in “[Big Data, Bigger Outcomes](#)” as Lorraine Fernandes, RHIA, Michele O’Connor, MPA, RHIA, FAHIMA, and Victoria Weaver, RHIA, describe how we might use “Big Data” to solve healthcare challenges and revolutionize HIM by leveraging vast stores of data for use with more specific analysis. And Micky Tripathi traces how policy and legislation forces have changed the EHR in “[EHR Evolution](#),” looking all the way back to the earliest technological efforts of the late 1960s.

For HIM professionals, tomorrow will look very different from today on a number of levels. Now is the time to start our evolution.

Note

1. Bridges, William. *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*. Philadelphia, PA: Da Capo Press, 2009.

Article citation:

Gordon, Lynne Thomas. "Change Right Before Our Eyes" *Journal of AHIMA* 83, no.10 (October 2012): 23.

Driving the Power of Knowledge

Copyright 2022 by The American Health Information Management Association. All Rights Reserved.