

Continuing to Dream Big

Save to myBoK

By Patty Thierry Sheridan, MBA, RHIA, FAHIMA

As I prepared my incoming address for the AHIMA Convention and Exhibit last year, I turned to my family and friends for inspiration on music ideas. Little did I know that the hunt for a song with an upbeat tempo would set in motion a year that challenged us all to “Dream Big”—from AHIMA staff and volunteers to HIM colleagues, coworkers, and even my own family.

The song I eventually selected for my speech, titled “Dream Big” and penned by Emily Shackelton for an *American Idol* writing contest, turned out to be a theme that has permeated AHIMA’s culture. It challenges all of us to think bigger, dream bigger, and to make no small plans. As the song’s lyrics state, “What’s the use of dreaming if you don’t dream big?”

Once only a dream, the electronic health record is now a reality. This digital platform for creating, warehousing, using, and protecting health data changes everything. The EHR is our opportunity to ensure that caregivers and consumers have access to quality health data to provide more efficient and cost effective patient care, improved quality, and better collection and use of patient data in research.

AHIMA was founded in 1928 to “elevate the standards of clinical records in hospitals and other medical institutions.” Little could our founders have known how far that dream would reach. Our work continues, and the realization of a dream that has had a tremendous impact on the evolution of health data is close at hand.

Doing Our Part for Society

Health information management begins at home. Whatever we teach and practice in our workplaces as HIM professionals, we must also teach and practice with our families and friends. HIM professionals have the responsibility to partner with caregivers and to lead health information consumer education initiatives in their community-teaching consumers how to create and maintain personal health records and how to access and use health information for improved decision making with their caregivers.

AHIMA’s staff and the Consumer Health Practice Council advanced consumer initiatives through several activities this year, including the publication of a consumer pamphlet called “Understanding Your Medical Record,” found at the updated www.myphr.com. “How-to” information has also been published to update HIM practices on patient-centered healthcare in the practice brief “Consumer-Facing Health Information Practices.” AHIMA staff and volunteers also participated in government-sponsored activities such as the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT’s (ONC) Mobile Health Roundtable and Consumer Health IT Summit.

Be sure to also check out the resources and animated video developed by ONC for consumers that explains how EHRs and other health technology support secure access to health information at <http://www.healthit.gov/patients-families>.

Thank You, and Keep Dreaming Big

I heard many stories this year about HIM professionals who make our world a better place with efforts to implement effective and updated HIM practices. Inspiration truly is everywhere. Thank you for inspiring and challenging me to be my best throughout the year, and for the honor of being the 84th AHIMA president. Dream Big!

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Driving the Power of Knowledge

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