

Contributing to the EHR Movement: HIM Offers Important Expertise to IT Implementations

Save to myBoK

by *Wendy Mangin, MS, RHIA*

We have heard EHR experts encourage HIM professionals to “get a seat at the table.” No one can argue that HIM expertise benefits discussions on implementing a new imaging system, defining the legal electronic record, or starting a health information exchange. But exactly how can we contribute once we get to the table or how can we demonstrate our expertise in order to get there?

Drawing from Personal Experience

In late 1992 Good Samaritan Hospital implemented an online clinical documentation system. In preparing for the system, I served on a task force to move the clinical and ancillary staff to charting by exception. The task force also dealt with various implementation issues for the clinical documentation system, such as appropriate access to online information and guidelines for when the record would be printed.

The task force worked side by side with the IT department to ensure that reports were interfacing properly between the various systems. Throughout the process, the group discussed how to get the entire medical record online. We set a vision of first implementing online documentation, using COLD feeds from our disparate systems, then moving to imaging.

Good Samaritan’s IT steering committee, which consists of senior management, sets the vision and leads IT implementations. A couple of years ago, I inquired if I could serve on this committee permanently. At that time, it was felt the committee size and structure was sufficient for the needs of the facility.

Shortly after this request, I was invited to present information justifying the need for an imaging system. I knew this was a chance to show I had something to contribute toward Good Samaritan’s IT vision. My goal was to create a sense of urgency among the group and convince them that now was the time to have a legal online medical record.

I discussed patient safety and the advantages of online access to historical patient information, especially for emergency room physicians or physicians at home receiving calls from the hospital. I focused on the conveniences of completing deficient medical records online. I then explained how the chart completion process would work in the electronic world. I constantly brought the discussion back to quality patient care and the importance of timely access to patient information.

Following the discussion, the IT steering committee approved the budgeting necessary for the imaging system. A couple of weeks later, I bravely asked again if I could become a permanent member of the IT steering committee. This time, the request was approved. Sometimes, we must first demonstrate the contribution we can make before doors open to us.

Important Contributions

The book *Our Iceberg Is Melting* by John Kotter is a fable about succeeding in an ever-changing world. The penguins in the book organize, envision, and win over their fellow penguins to an entirely new way of thinking.

As HIM professionals, we can envision new ways of working. We must request to have a seat at the table and get involved in EHR initiatives in our workplaces. Whether the project involves a clinical documentation system, medication administration system, imaging system, CPOE, or a health information exchange project, we are the information experts and can make important contributions.

Wendy Mangin (wmangin@gshvin.org) is director of the medical department at Good Samaritan Hospital in Vincennes, IN.

Article citation:

Mangin, Wendy L. "Contributing to the EHR Movement: HIM Offers Important Expertise to IT Implementations" *Journal of AHIMA* 79, no.2 (February 2008): 8.

Driving the Power of Knowledge

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