Data Quality: Part of the e-HIM Agenda

Save to myBoK

by Linda Kloss, RHIA, CAE, executive vice president/CEO

This has been another remarkable year for advancing HIM issues and the HIM profession. Programs to improve patient safety through information solutions have gone from the drawing board to demonstration projects. On April 14, the HIPAA privacy rule went into effect across the US. In July, the secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services announced an agreement to make SNOMED available. In August, a first national standard for the electronic health record (EHR) was balloted.

AHIMA has worked on all fronts to help you deal with all this change. Last year, AHIMA launched the multi-year electronic health information management (e-HIM) project. The report of the e-HIM Task Force, "A Vision of the e-HIM Future," was provided to every member in September as a supplement to the *Journal*.

Throughout the summer, AHIMA volunteers developed practical guidance on a first set of e-HIM practice topics. Initial reports of these e-HIM workgroups were distributed to attendees at last month's AHIMA National Convention and Exhibit in Minneapolis. All members of AHIMA have full access to the reports on the Web site at www.ahima.org under "HIM Resources" then go to "e-HIM Resources."

AHIMA representatives have also been engaged in a number of collaborative projects to advance the state of the art and the image of HIM. Volunteers tested ICD-10-CM and took part in policy discussions on replacing ICD-9. Representatives participated in EHR and messaging standards work and research on the personal health record and privacy practices.

Momentum Continues in 2004

The push for safe, effective, and affordable healthcare keeps attention on health information system improvements. HL7 will ballot a new version of its EHR standard. Beginning January 1, 2004, Joint Commission-accredited healthcare organizations will be evaluated for compliance with seven patient safety goals, most of which depend on effective documentation policy and procedure. The Joint Commission will also increase the scope of hospital collection and reporting of performance measure data from two to three sets of core measures. As described in "Keen Eye on Core Measures," by Ann Watt and colleagues from the Joint Commission, there is real work to do in improving the quality of the data being collected and reported on the core measure data sets.

It's not just the Joint Commission that is collecting and reporting standardized data. Anita J. Slomski finds out from long-term care experts in "Checking the Numbers," that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' Nursing Home Compare is raising concerns about data quality and providing new opportunities for leadership by HIM professionals.

Data Quality: A Design Issue

Improving the accuracy of data for public reporting requires training and auditing for accuracy and completeness. It also involves working on the front end to design the databases, formats, definitions, and procedures that will ensure accurate capture of data in the first place. The vision for HIM in an electronic practice environment is clear that our impact comes from working to provide concurrent and real-time solutions.[1]

In "Relational Database Management: What You Need to Know," Donald T. Mon provides an overview of these types of databases and the need for HIM professionals to be involved in their design. Rich Moyer emphasizes the importance of data quality in "Data Warehousing: Myths, Pitfalls, and the Secret Weapon."

As we work to advance the e-HIM agenda, data quality needs to be front and center. As with privacy, patients expect that the accuracy of their personal health information will be safeguarded. And, just like privacy, accurate data is a professional value

for HIM.

Note

1. AHIMA e-HIM Task Force. "A Vision of the e-HIM Future." Chicago: AHIMA, 2003. Available at www.ahima.org.

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